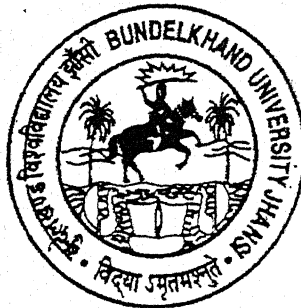


CONCEPT OF LOVE AND SEX IN THE MAJOR DRAMAS OF WILLIAM INGE

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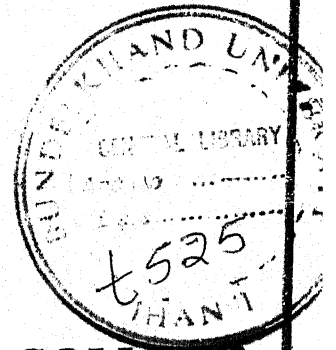
Submitted For The Degree of
Doctor Of Philosophy
(English)

At
BUNDELKHAND UNIVERSITY
JHANSI
2003

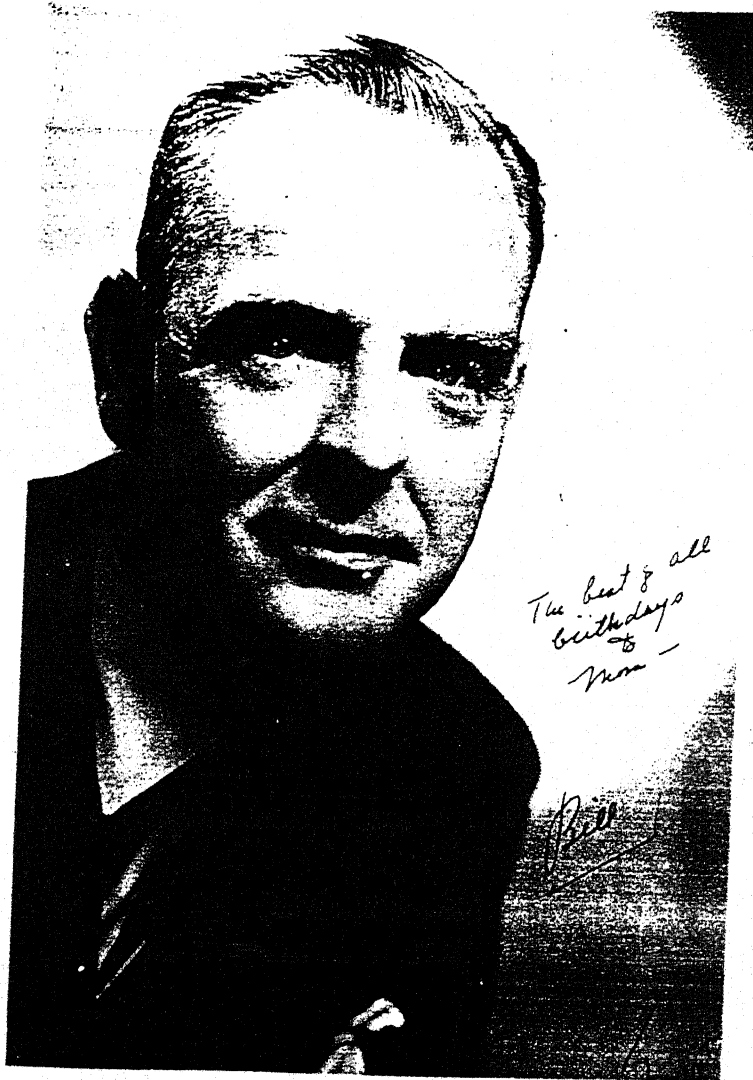


By
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Under The Supervision Of
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This is to certify that Smt. Rashmi Panday M.A., M. Phil. has worked for more than 200 days under me and the thesis entitled "CONCEPT OF LOVE AND SEX IN THE MAJOR DRAMAS OF WILLIAM INGE" is her an original work.

I further certify that the work of this thesis either partly or fully has not been submitted to any other institution for the award of any other degree.

B. R. Sharma
(Dr. BHARAT RATNA SHARMA)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I extend my heartiest gratitude to God Almighty and all my wishers for their blessings and co-operation in assisting me to complete this dissertation.

I am most indebted to Dr. B.R. Sharma. Without his guidance and inspiration my effort would have proved futile. I really lack appropriate words to thank for his willing help and guidance at all times.

I also owe a special debt of gratitude to Indo-American Centre for International Studies Hyderabad for providing me with considerable assistance by way of relevant research material on William Inge's play.

I am very grateful to the professors of Department of English, Hyderabad University, Hyderabad for their valuable suggestions.

I am thankful to the library of Bundelkhand University and Department of English and the Library of Bundelkhand Post Graduate College Jhansi for their help.

I also thank my family for providing me considerable assistance and support in the completion of my thesis.

Ultimately, I am thankful to all my associates who directly and indirectly participated and encourages me to complete my thesis.

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C H A P T E R 1

INTRODUCTION

(i) A BRIEF HISTORY OF MODERN AMERICAN DRAMA

Literature is the most universal of all arts. It took a long time to be born in America because it was the most unknown and neglected part of the world.

America was discovered in 1564 and the land attracted the people of various religions, regions and countries. This newly discovered land was not a country. The land attracted the French, the Spanish, the English, and the Indians. The people of this land were entirely varied except the fact that they belonged to the same new land. Their time was spent in maintaining and developing the newly discovered land according to their needs they had very little time for recreation, for entertainment, for literature and even no time for the theatre. The plays in beginning period were not mature and deficient in literary quality. William Dunlop writes that "the first efforts at dramatic literature in this country were wild."¹

The literary value of American drama during its first two hundred years is very slight. Parallel social and political atmosphere developed two divergent characteristics. The first is the imitation of English and European literature and the second is the

presentation of distinctive American qualities. In the early period the performances of plays were opposed by the people, colonial governments and by the Puritans. The Puritans thought that theatre was an evil influence because it was an offshoot of the devil so the government could raise its iron hands to stop the practice. Even the morality plays of the church were not allowed to be performed. According to Meserve the first recorded play written in English in America was *Ye Bare Ye Cubb*, which was performed in Accomac country Virginia in 1665. As American drama was not a favourite stream in literature for the American people, we do not find much information on earlier history of American drama. In the older histories of American literature there is no mention of American dramatists. In 1750, a group of professionals - the Hallum Company came from London with their Repertory programme and began to put forth a few ideas in dramatic form but they were of little or no importance. The period from 1775 to 1783 was that of American revolution for freedom. It was also the war for liberation of drama. The post war period was the time of reconstruction and the playwrights started adopting, translating and imitating the romantic tragedies of England, sentimental melodramas of France and Germany.

Around the middle of the 19th century the dramatists in America sought to represent a true picture of contemporary society by the false frame of melodrama. Slavery and race problem were already burning questions when Dio Boucicault presented The Octoroon in 1859. His dramas depicted the poor as well as the rich. Inevitably the drama before the beginning of 19th century, was attempting to establish the foundations for the development of American drama. From the beginning of the 19th century to the Civil War, American drama was experimenting with the various possibilities of a native and cultured best of Europe and England. It was the time when drama mirrored the social, political and historical movements of this period closely. The plays of the period were not better because of narrow commercialism of theatre managers. Most of the plays however, had lower literary qualities. On the other hand a handful of dramatists were attempting to achieve the best from their creativity. The 19th century had also established the drama as a means of amusement, as a weapon of a different type of expression and as a moral teacher. The theatre was "a flourishing entertainment form with more than two thousand resident professional companies across the continent in almost every city of more than village size, each with a repertoire of classics and new plays."² George Henry Boker's Francesca da Rimini (1885), Steele

Mackaye's Paul Kauver (1887), Samuel Woodworth's The Forest Rose (1825), J. k. Paulding's The Lion of the West (1830) and many other plays came on the stage but the plays of this period lacked literary depth or quality. The general absence of literary quality was not only in American drama but Britain and other European countries the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were generally fallow periods for dramatic literature.

In 1890 Clyde Fitch began to revolutionize the American drama. He presented Beau Brummel with an excellent portrait of a dandy whose critical faculty was small. In the same year a new realist James A. Herne appeared with his famous play Margaret Fleming. The play put questions about sexual and economic Exploitation. It also brought a more complex image of reality into the theatre. Clyde Fitch and Herne made their place among the audience.

With the beginning of the 20th century a new playwright entered the dramatic world of America. Her name was Rachel Crothers. Her first play The Three of US (1906) was a western melodrama. Crothers' other play A Man's World has a complaint against injustice. But Crothers' first really successful play was He and She in 1911. Her best plays are Expressing Willie, When

Ladies Meet and Susan and God. She was the most successful woman dramatist of her period whose superficially smart and bright and modern comedies are "good theatre" and excellent acting vehicles.

The trend of realism in American drama was started by the contemporary dramatists. Eugene Walter's *The Easiest Way* (1905) and Edward Sheldon's *The Boss* (1911) were the important attempts based on realism.

In addition, dramatic criticism began to establish in theatrical magazines when the 19th century was about to end. Washington Irving was one of the best critics of the period. Due to the development of dramatic criticism the playwrights began to improve the dramatic qualities of their works. From Civil War to World War I American drama did not merely improve its qualities but it changed from a profession to an art for the playwrights. By the end of 19th century the authors started writing about real life. The audience did not appreciate the unrealistic picture of life. In the world of pre-O'Neill drama some popular but important playwrights were William Vaughn Moody, Percy Mackaye, George Ade, George M. Cohan, David Belasco, Gillette, Eugene Walter and Louis Anspacker.

Modern American drama began during the second decade of

the 20th century while "the movement that produced modern drama in Europe. England and Ireland reached America last of all."⁸ Ibsen in Norway, Chekhov in Russia and Shaw in Britain had already posed the theatre as a responsible vehicle for serious and comic literature. In the second decade of the 20th century many little theatre groups were coming into existence in America. The Provincetown players, the Washington Square Players and the Neighbourhood Players were eminent groups of American theatre in 1920's. Later the Washington Square Players was converted into the Theatre Guild and it became the producer of many good Broadway plays. These theatre groups produced a lot of remarkable plays in future and made American drama capable "to take honourable position alongside the contemporary European drama."⁹ The four significant incidents in 1920's marked the beginning of modern American drama-the foundation of little theatre in Chicago under the publication of Eugene O'Neill's first plays in 1914, the beginning of three important noncommercial theatre organizations: the Provincetown players, the Washington Square Players and the Neighbourhood players in 1915 and the last important event was the first public performance of O'Neill's plays in 1916. Thus "the little theatre movement brought a new

generation of writers to the theatre.”¹⁰ With the publication of O'Neill's first play Bound East for Cardiff a new trend had begun and beside “O'Neill no playwright who contributed to the modern American drama wrote any important work before the outbreak of the First World War.”¹¹ His works proved him the greatest American playwright of his period. His plays were translated into most of the important European languages. He gave the theatre a new and unique experience.

O'Neill was born on 16 October 1888 on Broadway in New York, city and got the atmosphere of theatre in his family as well as in society. He joined the Provincetown Players group in the summer of 1919 where he met a group of young spirits including George Cram Crook, Susan Glaspell, Mary Heaton Vorse, Wilber Daniel Steel, Harvy Kemp, Hatchins Hapgood. O'Neill proved himself an active member of the group. His first play was Bound East for Cardiff (1916), which became a successful play. In the Zone (1917), The long Voyage Home (1917) and Moon of the Caribees (1918), followed it in coming years. O'Neill's earliest plays were naturalistic and anecdotal which deals with sailors on or recently off the sea. These short plays are bound with thesis in some degree and they have an unstated universality. All these plays have a common element 'obsessiveness' in different forms Before

Breakfast, Fog, The Sniper, Ile, Where the Cross is Made and The Rope are his other plays before 1920.

O'Neill's first Broadway production Beyond the Horizon (1920) got the Pulitzer Prize. It was "a milestone in the advance of the American drama."¹² It is a tragedy of fate, illusion and human frustration. The play opens with the sunset and closes with the sunrise. The Emperor Jones, O'Neill's next play, is a story of an American black man who is unable to escape his inheritance of primitive instinct and belief. O'Neill introduces spectacular costumes and masks in the play. Anna Christie (1921) deals "with the redemption of the fallen and bedraggled Anna through the power of a sailor's love and the tradition of the sea."¹³ O'Neill received the second Pulitzer Prize in 1921 for the play. His next play The Hairy Ape (1922) has more expressionistic tone than his previous plays. It can be considered a play which is more ambitious in theme and technique. The hero Yank suffers from the sense of homelessness and he tries to set out in quest of his home. O'Neill has presented Yank's concept of "belonging". It is O'Neill's nostalgic tribute to the romance of the sea.

O'Neill's Desire Under the Elms came in 1924. It is "a full-length tragedy of obsession and inevitability."¹⁴ The play

expresses a conflict between father and a son so we can call it a drama of obsessions in conflict. O'Neill had used Freudian psychology effectively to expose the characters Mourning Becomes Electra (1931), a realistic, domestic melodrama, is "a trilogy based on the Oresteia of Aeschylus".³ The play has the stature and power of classical tragedy and O'Neill has translated the story and characters bodily into an American setting.

Strange Interlude, The Great God Brown, Bound East for Cardiff, In the Zone, The Long Voyage Home, Dynama, Days without End, Moon of the Carbees, The Dreamy Kid, Different, Lazarus Laughed, Long Day's Journey into Night and The Iceman Cometh are O'Neill's other well known and memorable plays. Even O'Neill began his career with naturalistic plays but later he turned towards expressionism. Naturalistic plays depict outer reality of life without artificiality while expressionistic plays present inner struggle on the stage. His characters suffer from psychological war. His characters suffer from Freudian neuroses. In some plays "Freudian psychology is offered as a modern dramatic equivalent for the Fates and Furies of Greek tragedy."¹⁷ The theme and subject matter of his plays are extraordinarily various. O'Neill's characterization has its particular pattern. His characters are rough in manners and in

speech. They are violent and hard in action. They are simple lonely people. The combination of skill and vision can be seen in his works. He was expert in producing stage effect and "years of travel and experience have given him a consciousness of the mystery of life which prevents him from using skill merely for surface effect."⁴

O'Neill, therefore, established American drama in a respectable place and O'Neill is the one American playwright who has consistently written as an artist. Elmer Rice, another eminent playwright in modern American drama is best known for two plays, The Adding Machine (1923) and Street Scene (1929). He wrote some fifty full-length plays, four novels and a book on theatre. His best expressionistic and impressionistic presentation was The Adding Machine. The play is a great satire against automation which is at the cost of human unemployment. It is memorable for its sardonic humour the universal note of its theme and for its vision.

Rice's Street Scene (1929) is a fine example of selective realism. He borrowed its title from the language of painters. The play shows "an inadequate love affair between the stagehand's daughter and the radical's son and a murder committed by the girl's father."²¹ Street Scene won the Pulitzer Prize. Rice's another play Dream Girl achieved a popular and critical success. He also wrote

some other plays like On Trial, Lucky Sam Mac Carver, Close Harmony, We, the People and Awake and Sing!

Rice presented not the problems of a particular family but of a large group of people. His characters belong to middle class of big cities and "are varies in racial background in philosophy, in occupation, in social status and intellectual stature."⁵ Thus he was "the first of moderns to enter the limelight by bringing revolutionary ideas to American drama."

Susan Glaspell, was one of the founders of the Provincetown players. She wrote short satiric comedies and realistic dramas as well Trifles (1916) was her most successful work which is based on sexual differences. Glaspell's other serious play The Outside (1917) shows the special experience of women Bernice (1919), Inheritors (1921), The Verge (1921) and Alison's House are her other works. Her plays are "intelligent and psychologically profound but too delicate and literary for the theatre."

Besides, Zona Gale's Miss Lulu Bett (1921), Owen Davis, Icebound (1923), Hatcher Hughes, Hell-Bent for Heaven (1924), Sidney Howard's They Knew What They wanted (1925), George Kelly's Crag's Wife (1926), Paul Green's 'In Abraham's Bosom

(1927) and March Connelly's The Green Pastures (1930) were the best and Pulitzer awards winners of their seasons.

Although in the beginning of twentieth-century the most realistic plays were written, yet some verse dramas, classical tragedies and pageant plays were also written Percy Mackaye's plays "ranged in style from pseudo-Shakespearean verse tragedy to grand semi-operate masques and pageants."⁶ Washington, The Man Who Made Us (1916), The Roll Call, A Masque of the Red Cross (1918) are other plays of this kind. Edward Knoblock's Kismet (1911) dealing with an Arabian Nights tale was a big hit. Thus, during the first thirty years of the 20th century virtually every Broadway season had at least one exotic melodrama set in different countries.

In addition, European influences began to affect the American drama in 1920's and the Broadway season of 1922-23 included some well known plays like Capek's R.U.R and The Insect Comedy, Pirandello's Six Characters in Search of an Author, and Ibsen's Peer Gynt. Some folk plays also got success during the period. Dorothy and Dubose Heyward's Porgy (1927) and March Connelly's The Green Pastures (1930) are memorable folk plays.

William Saroyan and Robert Sherwood, the important members of the Theatre Guild, also contributed to American

drama by their writings. Saroyan's The Time of Your Life and My Hearts in the Highlands and Sherwood's The Road to Rome, The Petrified Forest and The Queen's Husband are some memorable plays. Both of them used dramatic realism to present their characters. They showed sentimental and romantic picture of life.

The 'Depression' became an important subject for realistic drama in the 1930's. After Elmer Rice, Clifford Odets is the most eminent playwright who attempted to deal with the Depression in domestic terms. With an impression of Rice's We, the People he wrote his significant play Waiting for Lefty (1935). His most successful play was Golden Boy (1937). In the 1930's the drama of the depression attracted the people in Broadway. His other fine works are Awake and Sing and Paradise Lost. Odets's plays dealt with the impact of the depression of the 1930's upon American Life and made a profound impression upon their audiences.

In the 1930's the domestic realism was accepted as a means of depicting a larger reality. Sidney Kingsley, a 'Realist' brought his important play Dead End in 1935 which presents a striking setting of a New York City street. The play's power comes from its Street-scene-like naturalistic depiction of the ordinary events of the days, particularly the activities of the boys, who wonder aimlessly

from innocent games to robbery and violence. Sidney Kingsley's Men in White (1933) was the Pulitzer award winner in 1934.

With the end of the 1930's World War II broke out in Europe. So the American dramatists of the thirties moved their subject towards the war. The two dramatists, who reacted vigorously to war, were Robert Sherwood and Hellman, Lillian Hellman's Watch on the Rhine (1941) was a powerful antifacist play. She commented seriously on American foreign policy of last 20 years in her other play The Searching Wind (1944). Robert Sherwood's There Shall Be No Night and The Ragged Path were also the plays of this stream. His work was moral and they expressed a nostalgia for the values and for the world which he had first thought destroyed by the First World War.

One dramatist who began his career as a realist but later he reacted against the limitation and wrote verse tragedies in the Elizabethan mode was Anderson. His first realistic play was What Price Glory. Elizabeth the Queen (1930) is a tragedy which is focused on events late in Elizabeth's life involving her love for the Earl of Essex. Mary of Scotland (1933) is an historical verse play but "Winterset is one of Anderson's best play" full of poetry and philosophy. His Both Your Houses got Pulitzer Prize in 1933. Valley Forge (1934), Key Largo (1934), High Tor (1937), The Masque of

Kings (1937) and Anne of the Thousand Days (1948) are his other plays.

The other important stylistic non-conformist contemporary dramatist of Anderson was Thornton Wilder. He also rebelled against the limitation of domestic realism. According to Wilder "a play that was set too firmly in a specific time and place forsook the drama's ability to be universal ————." ⁷ Too much emphasis on the realness of a drama's setting lost the drama's ability to evoke a sense of magic and mystery. His first two volumes of short play were The Angle that Troubled the Waters (1928) and The Long Christmas Dinner (1931). His best play was Our Town which is as Berkowitz remarks the "most beloved of American plays." ⁸ The play is a story of ordinary people who have the deceptive appearance of simplicity and its "unashamed appeal to open and honest sentimentality make it perhaps the most accessible of great plays." The Merchant of Yonkers came 1938. It is light farcical comedy in which just about everyone gets what he or she wants. The Manchmater was a revision work. The Skin of Our Teeth (1943) is a complex allegory. In the play he has used "the method of humorous surrealism to tell the whole history of civilization from the time of the cave man down to the present." Thornton Wilder, therefore, has made a reputed place among the modern American

dramatist. Like Anderson he exposed some of the failing of domestic realism.

William Saroyan, a well-known American dramatist, contributed to the treasury of American drama by his some good plays. He was the writer of his own style. His works show that his view of life is "startling, exciting and penetrating in its abrupt simplicity."³ His first play was My Heart's in the Highland's (1939) which has the technique half way to expressionism. His another play The Time of your Life (1939) became more successful than his first play. It is a full length and a conventional play which received Pulitzer Prize in 1940 Saroyan's one Broadway play, The Cave Dwellers came in 1957. The play tells "of people with virtues of royal proportions who live in a theatre that is the world and find that all is good."³¹

His other plays are- Don't Go Away Mad, Sam Ego's House, The Slaughter of the Innocents, The Secret of Life, No One in His Right Mind and Sam the Highest Jumper of Them All.

However it is impossible to include all the playwrights and their all the works in some pages though in above description it is clear that the serious American drama was in constant progress and a lot of brilliant and intelligent writers appeared in the scene of

theatre. In 1930's 'drama was a pragmatic weapon a somewhat blunt instrument' for the writers. Besides these serious plays comic plays were also written, Comedy plays were also improved and developed with the time.

Comedy is an important form of drama. The nineteenth century American comedy played on the idea of the artless American triumphing over the sophisticated Englishman. Booth Tarkington's Clarence (1919) and Don Marquis' The Old Soak are the comedies of this stream. The 20th century comedies petted old-fashioned values against new-fangled manners and morality. Langdon Mitchell's The New York Idea (1906), Salisbury Field's Wedding Bells (1919) and Anne Nichols' Abie's Irish Rose (1922) are some well-known comedies of their period.

George S. Kaufman and Philip Barry are considered as the best comic playwrights of the early 20th century. Kaufman wrote Dulcy (1921), To The Ladies (1922) and Merton of the movies (1922) in the collaboration of Marc Connelly. Kaufman's The Butter and Egg Man (1925) and June Moon make fun of Hollywood, Broadway and pop music. The front Page (1928) and Twentieth century (1928) are two classic farce in the collaboration of Ben Hecht and Charles Marc Arthur. In 1930 Kaufman wrote Once in a lifetime with a new collaborator Moss Hart. The play has fast-paced

wit and humorous dialogues. Kaufman and Hart's You Can't Take it With You got Pulitzer award in 1937. The Man Who Came to Dinner (1939) and Merrily We Roll Along are other important plays.

Though Philip Barry wrote a lot of plays, his reputation rests on a handful of successful comedies. His The Philadelphia Story is the most elegant comedy in which Barry makes fun equally of radicals and of the rich, but he allows the latter the last laugh. Like Philadelphia Story, The Animal Kingdom (1932) is also a comedy of manners. Barry's Hotel Universe (1930) is a play about the glittering people, those with whom he never tired of associating. His other memorable plays are You and I (1923), The Youngest (1924), Paris Bound (1927), Holiday (1928), The Animal Kingdom (1932) and Here Come the Clown (1938).

S. N. Behrman created some sentimental comedies. In his Biography (1932) and End of Summer (1936) he gave the Drawing room subgenre some additional weight by adding a bitter sweet elegiac tone. His other plays are Brief Moment (1931), Rain From Heaven (1934) and Jacobowsky and the Colonel (1944). Jacobowsky and the Colonel is "a farce comedy with suspense and a war setting."¹⁰ No Time for Comedy (1939) is a play of light sentiment.

In addition, A. E. Thomas No More Ladies (1934), James Hagan's One Sunday Afternoon (1933), Maxwell Anderson's The Star-Wagon (1937), Paul Osborn's On Borrowed Time (1938), and Morning at Seven (1939), Mary Chase's Harvey (1944) and John Van Durten's I Remember Mama made their place among the contemporary audiences. Idiot's Delight (1936), by Robert Sherwood, The Women (1936) by Clare Booth, Stage Door (1936) by Edna Ferber and Kaufman were also effective plays.

However, from the beginning of the American drama to 1945 the drama developed & improved its quality. It is clear that by 1930 American drama had become a significant art form 'capable of supporting ambitious literary intentions, both serious and comic' but simultaneously it was performing its social functions as a source of entertainment. The dramatist accepted different styles like Realism, Expressionism and the drama of Depression and war. The American dramatists dealt with large social, political and moral issues. Broadway plays were being appreciated but after the Second World War the new generation of American theatre centralized their attention 'on psychological dramas of earlier writers to carry the Broadway based American theatre to its highest accomplishments'. From 1945 a golden age for Broadway theatre started when Williams The Glass Menagerie came on the stage.

Before 1945 O'Neill and Clifford Odets and other writers prepared the background for the mid-century drama.

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(ii) BROADWAY THEATRE

In the nineteenth century live theatre was a flourishing entertainment form. More than two thousand resident professional companies were giving their performances on the stage, based on classics and new plays. At first Philadelphia and later New York were emerging as the cultural capital of the nation. The audience in Chicago, St. Louis Denver and many other cities started taking interest in new plays and leading performances in first class productions.

But in the last two decades of the nineteenth century New York based producers began sending out touring companies with their hits. By 1920 the city had achieved monopoly of the American theatre. American drama of the era presented its natural voice in domestic realism. By World War II some great changes started taking place in the society as well as in the theatre and some young dramatist appeared in the world of drama. A new form was began in the theatre which was called the 'Broadway Play'. Broadway, a street, is situated in New York "and for roughly the first half of the twentieth century 'Broadway' was for all intents and purposes the entire American theatre."¹

Broadway was the place where all the new plays, all the major playwrights, all the best actors, directors and designers could be found within one square mile of one city. The American got the opportunity to experience American theatre at its best. There was a hard competition. In America the first half of the 20th century both the terms 'Broadway theatre' and 'American theatre' were considered as synonymous. In the first thirty years of the century American drama was reborn as a serious literary form. American dramatists discovered that their plays could acknowledge the existence of social and moral issues that did not have ready answers. By 1930 American drama had become "a significant art form, capable of supporting ambitious literary intentions both serious and comic while still meeting its social meeting its social functions as a source of entertainment."²

From 1930 to 1945 the American drama was searching its natural voice in domestic realism. The playwrights attempted to deal with large social, political and moral issues in their dramas. The best plays of the Broadway theatre were produced from 1945 to 1960. The Broadway theatre produced the greatest plays of America's greatest playwrights during the period including the early works of Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams and the late

and posthumous works of Eugene O'Neill. This period is considered as a golden age for Broadway theatre. 'Method' acting was introduced and developed. It was the psychologically realistic performance style. The musical theatre achieved a lot in collaborations of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein. Broadway theatre flourished through "the creative and illuminating accomplishments of such directions as Elia Kazan and Jose Quintero."³

The era of Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller started after 1945. These two new comers' name had never been heard in the New York theatre before 1945 and Tennessee Williams' first Broadway production The Glass Menagerie was given the Critics Prize for the season 1944-45 and Arthur Miller whose first play 'All My Sons' received the same award for 1946-47.

The trend of the 1950's in American drama was entirely changed from the 1930's. Arthur Miller was raising social and political issues by dramatizing their effect on the everyday domestic lives of ordinary people. On the other hand Tennessee Williams and other dramatist concentrated on psychological exploration that had been the concern of the realistic dramatists of the 1920's.

However, Eugene O'Neill was the dominant figure in American drama of 1920's and Clifford Odets gave shape to the

drama of 1930's while the mid-century American drama was represented by the two dominant personalities-Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller. Both of them had parallel careers. They presented the best American plays of the 1950's and both of them ended their periods of greatest accomplishment realistic domestic melodrama. They created two different schools – the school of Miller and the school of Williams. We will study some of their plays in Broadway theatre in the following paras:

Arthur Miller :- Miller's All My Son's is a classic example of the well made realistic play with a thesis. The main character Joe Keller takes risk to compromise with his integrity to advance the living standards and worldly prestige of his family. The play presented the conflict between Joe and his conscience, between two standards of business conduct, between the realism and the dreams of the strong minded Kate. The play introduces the theme of "the inescapable drive for economic success and public approval, the conflict between competing moralities, the temptation to do the wrong thing for the right reasons, and the identification of the political and economical system as the culpable cause of these torments and dilemmas."⁴ The play raises sympathy for Joe's crimes in the place of hatred because Miller directs the blame at a

world that would turn a man's love for his family into a crime and force him to choose between conflicting moral imperatives. Miller is scrupulously fair in presenting both the characterization and the terms of the debate. Miller's record play Death of Salesman (1949) placed him among the best writers of the 1950's in the modern theatre. The hero of the play Willy Loman has become the best known protagonist in modern American drama. Willy is never able to face the realities of life and likes to live in his false social and personal values. He is thrown into despair and madness by his constant failures in the world of business. The play is an exposure of the dark and dangerous side of the American Dream."⁵ Miller has mingled expressionistic element in it to dramatize his hero's internal experience and mental collapse.

Miller's next play was The Crucible in 1953. Though it was an adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's An Enemy of the People. The play is not merely an abstract speculation on the nature and power of truth, but a directly political assertion of the democratic right to freedom of belief.

Miller's next Broadway production in 1955 was A memory of Two Mondays. It is a simple and realistic story of a college student and an automobile parts warehouse where the boys work temporarily. In 1964 A View From the Bridge was Miller's next play

which represents a conscious attempt at classical tragedy. Miller has used Freudian psychology as a modern equivalent of inescapable fate, to give a tragic stature and intensity to the story of Eddie Carbone, whose love for his niece approaches the incestuous. Its subject matter has the similarity of Shakespeare's Othello. The play's dramatic center lies in Eddie's inner torment who is the main character of the play. This element shows a close resemblance to Shakespeare's, Macbeth.

Miller's other plays like Incident at Vichy (1964) and The Price (1968) are the plays in Broadway theatre with purposeful points of view.

Generally, Miller's plays do have real American essence because they raise social, moral and political issues of American society. To him the social drama is the drama of whole man. T. Bogart, Richard Moody and Walter J. Meserve comment on Miller's technique when they say that he was a writer of philosophic temperament for whom "the idea is important in a play and it is the dramatist's objective to state the truth about the nature of man."⁶

Miller's characters are unable to adjust themselves in the modern materialistic world. Miller focuses upon his study of the individual relationship to the larger social and political community.

Finally Berkowitz concludes that his plays help to explain America as a culture in itself.

Tennessee Williams:- Tennessee Williams was probably the most popular and successful playwright in Broadway. His first Broadway bound play was Battle of Angels which came in 1940. The Glass Menagerie (1944) was his first success in Broadway. The play is a story of Wingfield family who is not capable to work in the real world. The story moves around Amanda and her children Laura and Tom. The play has deep sentimental touch. It is full of poetic language, the undisguised verbal and physical symbols which make it a non-realistic play.

In Williams another successful Broadway play A Streetcar Named Desire the central figure Blanche is a lonely and confused girl who comes to her sister Stella's home to escape her isolation. She falls in love with the friend of Stella's husband Stanley. Stanley rapes her and she has to leave her sister's house. Her romantic life ends and she remains isolated while her sister Stella and her husband Stanley remain together. Thus the play ends with Blanche's defeat against insanity. The play is without question Williams' best play and shares with Miller's Death of a Salesman and O'Neill's Long Days Journey into Night the very top rank of American drama.

In 1953 Williams appeared in theatre with his most cynical heavy-handed symbolistic theatrical piece, Camino Real. In the play "Don Quixote dreams a pageant of old and new meaning in which Kilroy, ----- meets the corruption of life, is seduced by fraud, becomes a patsy and finally is chosen the fit companion of Don Quixote. dreamer."⁷

The Rose Tattto (1951) and Period of Adjustment (1960) are Williams minor comedies "both recognizing the spirit crippling power of loneliness and withdrawl from life and both offering immersion in sexuality as a life-affirming solution."⁸

Williams Cat on a Hot Tin Roof came in 1955. It has a strong slightly sensationalistic domestic story. The play is dramatically effective and offers psychological insights and moral Judgements.

His other plays are Suddenly Last Summer (1958), Sweet Bird of Youth (1958), Orpheus Descending (1957), Summer and Smoke (1948). Williams last artistic and commercial success was The Night of the Iguana. After 1961 he continued to write and produced plays like The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore (1964), Stopstick Tragedy (1965) and The Seven Descents of myrtle (1968) but these and not bring success for him.

Tennessee Williams is entirely non-political dramatist. He

was interested to present the activities of the human spirit and psyche. Most of his characters however suffer from the guilt of murder, rape castration, cannibalism, alcoholism, promiscuity, homosexuality and many other shocking violation of moral and social norms. His characters attempt to struggle with loneliness through sexual satisfaction Williams has used sexuality as a solution to the World's problems. Williams man has little dignity and is alone in a world where he must try to fight off 'the corrupting love'. In his plays "purity is befouled, youthful beauty becomes old and ugly and sensitive man is destroyed by the crass and brutal."⁹ Lonely and sensitive man can neither remain in reality nor can he escape from it. The main theme of his plays is loneliness and Williams' vision of man is without hope.

As Miller and Williams dominated the serious American drama in mid-century, a very few dramatists would come into limelight. William Inge succeeded in Broadway theatre with his four famous plays – Come Back Little Sheba, Picnic, Bus Stop and The Dark at the Top of the Stairs. He was a protégé of Tennessee Williams and his plays "suggest a kind of domesticated Williams".¹⁰

In Broadway Robert Anderson is a well known name after Williams Inge. He resembles Inge. Anderson's first Broadway success was Tea and Sympathy in 1953. The main character of the

play is Tom, a schoolboy. He is lonely and sensitive and his "problems in trying to prove his manhood are solved by his housemaster's wife whose sympathy knows no limits."¹¹

All Summer Long (1954) and Silent Night, Lonely Night are his other memorable plays. Anderson followed Inge in playwriting and he is "sometimes charged with philosophical cowardice for pretending that complex problems have simple solution----- sometimes accused of introducing salacious material just for titillation without facing its moral or psychological implication."¹²

Sidney Kingsley can be considered an important part of Broadway's Establishment. His life was theatre Lunatics and Lovers and Night Life are his memorable plays on serious social themes Kingsley is an excellent craftsman but his weakness is his desire to be safe.

William Gibson's career as a playwright also flourished during 1950's. His two most successful plays Two for the Seesaw (1958) and The Miracle Worker (1959) enjoyed packed houses in Broadway. His two better-known plays were capable to fulfill Broadway demands.

Robert Adrey was a committed writer in Broadway. His dramas deal with unpopular political themes. His first big Broadway

success was Thunder Rock (1939)

Lorraine Hansberry was another playwright of Broadway in 1950's. Her 'A Raisin in the Sun' (1959) was the first play by a black woman to be staged on Broadway. The play is noteworthy for its quality.

Paddy Chayefsky offered some successful plays in 1950's. Like Inge and Anderson he also tells the stories of small people. He allows his lover to choose an imperfect happiness. His Middle of the Night (1956) and The Tenth Man (1959) are his remarkable pieces in Broadway theatre. Arthur Laurents contributed Broadway theatre by The Time of the Cuckoo (1952) and A Clearing in the Woods (1957). He was the dramatist of skill and ambition.

One more dramatist of 1950's in Broadway was Carson McCullers whose The Member of the Wedding (1950) is considered as social drama in American theatre.

Besides these new writer Eugene O'Neill's some posthumous plays appeared during the period. His The Iceman Cometh, A Moon for the Misbegotten and Long Day's Journey can be put among the best play in American Drama.

At mid-century no comic dramatist dominated the decade. Neither any older dramatist nor any newcomer could produce any hits in Broadway comedy. The important comic dramatists of

previous decades – Kaufman, Behrman, Lindsay and Crouse continued writing during 1950's. Elmer Rice's Dream Girl, Crarson Kanin's Born Yesterday, Norman Krasna's John Loves Mary, and George Axelrod's The Seven Year Itch are some important plays of the period. Some other important Broadway comedies of mid-century are Life with Mother, The Silver Whistle, Visit to a small Planet, Two Blind Mice, and The Solid Gold Cadillac.

Alan Lewis says, In the theatre, as in all the arts, a few lead the way. Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller were the leading playwrights of William Inge's period. Being professionals Broadway playwrights were dedicated to the glory of pure entertainment. They regarded "the theatre as a place for laughs, thrills and escape from boredom."¹³

Broadway plays were mainly psychological and sentimental melodramas. In Broadway theatre "the mark of success was SRO (Standing Room Only)."¹⁴ Some writers presented political and social issues, psychiatry, the search for love and sex and the loneliness of lost souls. Freudian Analysis was getting popularity Broadway playwrights were always ready to give the public what it wants. The Broadway plays have over emphasis upon sex. The playwrights have mingled the elements of sex and sentiment.

Basically they were soft-hearted sentimentalists, outrageously, righteous. Laughter derives, not from sex as an accepted fact of life, but from a nervous prurience in touching the forbidden.

The subject of their plays is either the social and political or the psychological and spiritual. Williams and Miller were the leading dramatists of the Broadway theatre and they formed their own schools. Rest of the dramatists followed their style and pattern. Williams and Miller are distinct in their individual views of man. Thus the history of American drama shows that the mid-century American drama and Broadway theatre are synonymous. Broadway theatre was at its peak point from 1945 – 1960. The American drama was "the full flowering of realistic contemporary domestic melodrama, a mode that proved itself to be the natural medium for the expression of the American experience in drama, --- -----."¹⁵ Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams attempted to express, American experience and American dreams through their dramas. Though O'Neill's career flourished before 1945, his some posthumous plays became successful in Broadway theatre in 1950's. Moreover Miller and Williams are two significant figures who dominated Broadway theatre as well as American drama at mid-century. Arthur Miller was a moralist and his plays has been focused on social matters. Miller "examines the individual

matters. Miller "examines the individual in his moral behaviour under specific social pressures."

Since O'Neill Williams is the first American playwright who has explored the life of the injured and insulted people of society in his plays. He has emphasised the sexual aspect of life. Williams has always felt it necessary to express the violent and the vulgar but only as a means to approaching truth.

Therefore, the best plays of Miller and Williams has made American drama rich and prosperous. William Inge was influenced by these writers but he was mostly affected by Williams' style and theme.

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(III) WILLIAM INGE AND BROADWAY THEATRE

With a smash hit a new dramatist came into lime light meanwhile Miller and Williams were at the top of their career. The new dramatist was William Motter Inge whose entrance as a playwright was welcomed by Broadway audience. It is very strange that Inge never thought of being a playwright in his earlier life because he had already accepted 'Teaching' as his profession. It was Tennessee Williams who inspired him to be a playwright. Williams first success The Glass Menagerie motivated Inge to be a creative writer. Inge watched the play when he was a journalist for a short period in the place of his friend in a reputed newspaper the 'Star Times'. Inge went to Chicago as Star Times critic to witness a performance of "The Glass Menagerie" which he found "so beautiful and so deeply moving", as he said that he "felt a little ashamed for having led an unproductive life."¹

He congratulated Williams and called his drama, "the first finest thing I'd seen in the theatre in years."² Inge expressed his wish to write a play and Williams promised him to help him, Within three months he sent his first play Farther Off From Heaven to Williams who had just completed arrangements for the production

of Summer and Smoke in Margo Jone's theater 'Theatre47' in Dalas. The script of the play satisfied Williams and he inspired Inge to keep on trying, Inge continued and wrote two more plays in rapid succession. At the same time he had to leave the job of journalist and he joined the English department of Washington University in St. Louis, Now, he seriously considered play writing as a career and began to work on a new drama. He spent every spare moment in play writing. By the beginning of 1949 the new play Come Back Little Sheba was finished and Inge sent it to Tennessee. It was a full-length two-act play in six scenes. The play was so impressive that Miss Wood, Inge's agent could not refuse to produce it. She showed her confidence in the play and on February 4, 1949 she submitted it to the theatre Guild. Miss Wood found a preliminary report from the theatre Guild. In the report the play was appreciated because it had "the little touches of pity and understanding that make up the texture of this play. In a sense it illustrates Thoreau's. All man lead lives of quite of desperation."³

Inge left teaching that summer and reached New York to watch the rehearsals of his play. Ultimately the play faced its first audience on September 12, 1949. Shirley Booth and Sidney Blackmer were in leading roles. In the beginning the theatre was

houseful. After that as Inge has written, "houses began to dwindle to the size of tea parties."⁴ The actors accepted a cut in salary and

Inge reduced his loyalty so that the play could go on in the theatres.

Above all Come Back Little Sheba was Inge's grand success. The play got four votes from the Drama Critics Circle and became the best play of 1949-50 season. Later the play was sold for making a film on it after completing its 190 performances. A version of the play was broadcast by the Theatre Guild on radio. The Guild was satisfied with Inge's performance and it gave him one more opportunity to work on his next play.

Inge had written a play entitled 'Front Porch' between the writing of 'Farther Off From Heaven' and 'Come Back Little Sheba'. He began the task of redrafting it. Originally the play 'Picnic' was performed in Hyde park New York in August 1952 as 'Summer Brave'. Joushua Logan directed the play. Before its first show Logan advised Inge to change the title and some parts in the script of the play Summer Brave. Later with some significant changes Picnic became its final title. At first it was staged at the Music Box theatre in New York city on 19 February 1953. The leading characters were acted by Ruth McDavitt and Ralph Meeker. The opening night of the play was very distressing for Inge. But the play brought a great success again. Inge received Pulitzer Prize; the

Drama Critics Circle Award and the Donaldson Prize in 1953 for the play Picnic was off the stage on April 10, 1954 after 477 successful performances.

'Picnic' has a series of women characters or it may be called a gallery of women. Gassner called it "a Pathetic Pastoral" but it also possessed the richness, the earthiness of an alfresco bacchanale in terms of American folkways in the Middle West.

After his two hits Inge remained successful when his third play 'Bus Stop' appeared. The play is originally based on Inge's one of the earlier work People in the Wind. Bus Stop was first presented at the Music Box theatre on March 2, 1955 under the highly sensitive direction of Harold Clurman whom Inge calls the only real intellectual I know in the theatre.⁵ The play has not a strong story but it has a series of characters through which the story develops. The play was performed 478 times till April 21, 1956. Later on its film rights were sold and a highly successful motion picture was made on the play.

The success of his third play inspired him again to work on his next play. He started reworking on his earliest play 'Farther Off From Heaven' Now again he took the help of his earlier work to give a shape to his next presentation. His "The Dark at the Top of

the Stairs" was first staged at the Music Box theatre on 5 December 1957. Elia Kazan directed the play successfully. Rubin Flood, Cora and Lottie Lacy are its main characters. Pat Hingle acted as Rubin Flood, Teresa Wright as Cora and Eileen Heckart as Lottie Lacy. The play has an autobiographical touch. The play finally was off the stage after 468 performances on 17 January 1959 in Broadway. The Dark at to Top of the Stairs was his fourth constant success in Broadway and he had developed confidence regarding his craftsmanship. The play was well received critically R. Baird Shuman says, "-----Critics and playgoers alike marveled at the success of a dramatist who wrote modest plays about prosaic people-----."6

Inge's fifth Broadway production was a A Loss of Roses. Inge was more confident of its success than his earlier production Twentieth Century Fox Studios paid \$ 200000 for its film rights. In the rehearsal of the play Shirley Booth was selected for the character of Helen Baird. Miss Booth wanted some changes in the play and Inge accepted these changes but he began to fear that his play was growing weaker. Ultimately being satisfied Miss Booth left the play after the Washington opening in October. She feared that the character of Lila Green, played by Carol Haney was more stronger than hers. Immediately Betty Field was selected as Helen

Baird for the play. She has so little time for rehearsals that she could not prove herself effective in her character. The other actors were Warren Beatty as Kenny and Michael J. Pollard as Jelly Beamis. Mr. Daniel Mann directed the play. Inge was not satisfied with the rehearsals of the play so he stopped the show for some additional work on it. The play was staged as an six weeks later after Christmas holiday but it could not attract the audience. After the first Broadway show of the play Inge had to face very harsh reviews on it. "On reading the reviews Inge commented that he was being treated like some one who had spit on the floor."⁷ The critics offended Inge for producing a play like A Loss of Roses. The play was stopped after only 25 performances and Inge began to evaluate his failure. Simultaneously he tried to write a film play called 'Splendor in Grass'. Twentieth Century Fox made a film on it in 1961 and the film received an Academy Award. The film was directed by Elia Kazan and Natalie Wood, Warren Beatly, Pat Hingle and Audrey Christie played main characters. The audience gave a favourable response to the film so he moved to Hollywood and wrote second scenario All Fall Down. His third work was That Hill Girl. But here in Hollywood he was not satisfied. He always wanted to go back to his own mid-western town and to write for

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Broadway theatre. He felt that "he had been pushed rudely from the nest ----- New York ----- was too big for him to prosper there creatively."⁸

Inge's sixth Broadway play was 'Natural Affection'. It lasted for only 36 performances. The play opened at the Booth Theatre on 31 January 1963. Oliver Smith produced the play while Tony Richardson directed it. Kim Stanley, Harry Guardino, Tom Bosley, Monca May and Gragory Razakis were in lead role.

His another play Where's Daddy was produced by Michael Wager at the Billy Rose theatre. The play opened on 21 march 1966, but was off the stage after only 22 performances. Harold Clurman was the director of the play, Barbara Dena, Beau Bridge, Betty Field, Hiram Sherman, Barbara Ann Teer and Robert Hooks played main roles of the play.

Inge's last work in the world of theatre was an Off Broadway play The Last Pad. It opened at the Thirteenth Street Theatre on 27 November 1970 and ran for only six performances.

Besides these, Inge wrote many One-Act plays like Glory in the Flower, Summer Brave, The Strains of Triumph, To Bobolink, For her Spirit, People in the Wind, A social Event, The Boy in the Basement, The Tiny Closet, Memory of Summer, Bus Reley's Back in Town, The Rainy Afternoon and The Mall, The Disposal, The

Call, A Murder, Midwestern Manic and Margret's Bed are his some other shorter plays. He wrote many reviews and critical articles. He also attempted to write some novels but these novels were not of a high quality. During the last five years of his life he wrote three novels – Good Luck, Miss Wyckoff, My Son Is a Splendid Driver, and The Boy From The Circus. The first two novels could be published.

Thus Inge's life as a successful dramatist could not last for a long period. Therefore, he moved to Hollywood and attempted to write for Hollywood but his attraction for the screen would not remain for a long time. Inge himself expressed when he says, "A writer may be able to work there for a short time if he's got a unique idea with commercial possibilities. To spend your life just writing for movies is like training yourself to become an expert secretary."⁹

Though Inge worked on different fields of literature yet he was deeply interested in writing plays. Unfortunately he could give only 4 hits in Broadway theatre. The Dark at The Top of The Stairs was Inge's last successful play in Broadway which ended a significant phase of Inge's development both as playwright and person. He tried hard to give fifth smash hit in Broadway but failed. Inge suffered from depression and loneliness because of constant

failure in theatre. Probably the depression resulted his death on 10th June 1973. A typescript of Inge's latest novel The Boy From the Circus was found on the table of his living room when he died. With his death his life as a writer ended.

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C H A P T E R 2

**(i) IMPACT OF PERSONAL LIFE OF WILLIAM INGE ON HIS
DRAMAS**

“Personal experience” it has been rightly said “is the basis of all real literature” Personal sufferings influence the work of the artist when these have been transmitted to his work. Every personality has its own special features. If we study a man as an artist it is very necessary to know the artist as a man because personal attitude also reflects the work of art. William Motter Inge or Bill Inge was born in May 3, 1913 in Independence Kansas. His father Mr. Luther Clayton Inge was a salesman. His mother Mrs. Maude Sarah Gibson Inge was a woman of strong personality Inge was very close to his mother because of his father's long absence. His sisters were also his good companions. William love for stage was natural. His mother's elder brother John Gibson was a successful actor but he had to give up his career as an artist due to some domestic problems. Young William was the only child in his family with whom his uncle could share his experiences of stage because other children were not interested in stage life. He felt proud to know that Edwin Booth, a famous figure of stage, was his relative William's interest for acting started at the age of seven while he

recited a monologue, his sister Helen had been memorizing. Inge's first experience made him excited because "the third grade incident revealed him to himself from the moment he saw the stilled upturned faces of his classmates——."1

Inge was the youngest of five children; therefore, he was more protected than the average child. He was a good listener and a keen observer of the people. He was more sensitive than the other normal boys. In school and college he participated in dramatic activities. He suffered from depression for some times during his college education. He acted in tent shows and the experience helped him to learn dealing with small time show business show people and harsh realities of life. He faced financial crisis. He joined a high school in Columbus and later Stephense College Columbia for teaching English and dramatics. During World War II he was appointed as drama editor of St. Louis Star Times in 1943 to take Reed Hynd's place. In 1947 he had to leave his job when Hyde came back. But the job gave a precious opportunity to meet Tennessee Williams for an interview. Inge and Williams became good friends. Williams motivated him for play writing. Later Inge wrote many plays, short plays, film scripts, criticism, novels and reviews. His four plays – Come Back Little Sheba, Picnic, Bus Stop and The Dark at the Top of the Stairs became mega hits in

Broadway Theatre in 1950's.

After The dark at the Top of the Stairs Inge other production brought failure for him. Due to literary failures he again started teaching. On 10 June 1973 he died because of a lot of depression and loneliness.

Like any other artist Inge was also influence by his biographical atmosphere. His experience of life reflected his work. He had a sharp eye for observing the process of life.

What George Eliot said of art in general is specially true of the art of literature: it 'is the nearest thing of life; it is a mode of amplifying experience and extending our contact with other fellow-men beyond the bounds of our personal lot.'

Inge belonged to a middle class family in a small town of America. His characters often lead despairing lives. He deals with the characters' psychological problems deeply. It shows the writer's close study of human psyche and probably the dramatist might have faced the same state of mind in his earlier life.

Inge's problems were similar to other middle class Americans. His biography provides the fact that being the youngest child of his family he was over protected. According to the psychological theory, the youngest child develops in an extraordinary way. He feels himself superior and does not want to accept

any defeat. Inge also suffered from this situation. He was a man of reserved nature who did not want publicity. In his childhood he was very close to his mother meanwhile he never got affection from his father who was a salesman. Similarly in The Dark at the Top of the Stairs, Inge created a father who was a salesman and a strong mother like his own mother. The character Sonny is the reflection of the child William Inge. The play has an autobiographical touch. The play "is formed from pretty nostalgic memories of childhood without being very autobiographical."² The time and setting of the play is similar to Inge's surroundings of childhood. Like Inge Sonny flood has the quality to recite poems. In his childhood Inge was fond of collecting pictures of silent film stars. Sonny Flood also collects the pictures to escape from the dull reality of life. The close relationship of Inge and his mother helped him to understand the mother-son relationship. He has dealt with mother-son relationship in detail in The Dark at the Top of the Stairs and in some other plays Inge's mother had to do all house work in her husband's absence. She was the only person in the family who could fulfill his need and expectations while he never got affection from his father. In his four successful plays *Come Back Little Sheba*, *Picnic*, *Bus Stop* and *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs* most of his characters fail to get affection of their fathers. For Lola in *Come Back Little Sheba* and

Sonny in *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs* father means an object of fear. In *Picnic* and *Bus Stop* Madge, Millie, Cherie and Bo are also fatherless characters. In contrast Inge's mother are careful and affectionate mothers. They are very much concerned with their children and are very busy to do their duties. The impact of his personal life seems in the portrayal of careful mothers and careless fathers.

As a person Inge was a man of reserved nature who did not want publicity. He hardly used to share his personal matters with others. He did not get married so he was an isolated and depressed fellow. After the death of his parents his isolation became painful when his sister and cousins were busy in their own life. He had no companion with whom he could share his happiness as well as problems.

Generally Inge's characters suffer from the problem of sexual frustration and possibly it was also the problem of Inge's personal life. His isolation and depression reflected most of his characters. He was keenly, personally aware of alienation, loneliness and isolation. His characters suffer from these problems. Doc and Dr. Lyman try to find a solution of their problem through wine while Sammy commit suicide. Inge himself used to drink wine during the last days of his life and committed suicide. His own

experience as a teacher helped him in portraying professor Lyman's portrayal. He "is flawed because of the stereotype that

Inge had been a college professor."³

Inge's professors are not fully participating members of society. They are merely spectators who have no fundamental contribution to make to society and who are unconvincing as human beings, always on the periphery.

Rosemary Sidney, a school teacher in a small Midwestern town, has same shades in Picnic. Rosemary and Lyman are sexually frustrated persons. Rosemary's life is like Inge's life that "he himself experienced when taught in a small Midwestern town."⁴

Inge was unmarried and perhaps he was very much sensitive to the domination of women. Besides he had a controlling mother who on account of his father's regular absences, exercised an autocratic authority over her family." He also observed other strong women as Audrey Wood and Margo Jones for artistic advice and guidance. His "unresolved attitude towards his homoerotic tendencies seems also to have played a part in his attitude toward women."⁵

Inge's women are sexually stronger than men. Most of his female characters Rosemary Sidney, Lola Delaney, Lottie Lacy and Cora Flood are bent on dominating their men. They are modern women. His first Broadway hits are intensely realistic. He found that

there was a great deal of fraud and hypocrisy in human behavior, particularly in human sexuality. He observed in his childhood that the women protested while the men pursued suggesting that women hated men. But finally he realized that "there was an artificiality in this scenario, that some women are embarrassed by the extent of their love and passion which makes them dependent on men."⁶ A keen observation of male-female relationships made him successful in examining it in his plays. Besides Inge's women do not suffer from any mental maladies except Reenie in *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs*.

However Inge's works are reflected by his own experience. The characters of *Come Back Little Sheba* and *Picnic* are inspired by his own surroundings. The characters of the garrulous Lola is based on a sister of Inge's mother. He got the inspiration for the characters of Bo and Cherie in *Bus Stop* during a journey between St. Louis and Kansas City. He saw a Vagrant young man who was in avid pursuit a stranger girl. *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs* is a memory play which was formed from pretty nostalgic memories of his childhood. The play was "an attempt to come to terms with the past, to rearrange its parts and make them balance to bring a nature understanding to everyday phenomena that mystified me as a boy." He himself admits the fact that he was the little boy Sonny.

The play is a kind of fiction which was interwoven "around the members of my family."⁷ In The Dark at the Top of the Stairs Inge has developed oedipal theme and attempted to examine some darker sides of his own personality with an objectivity and dispassion.

Freudian school of criticism describes that a work of art is a result of psychological struggle and an artist transmits his experience in his works. In Inge's case he has also translated his sufferings in his works. To him a playwright thinks and sees life in a certain way. A playwright has the tendency to convert his life's experiences when he reflects upon them into theatre. Creative theatre 'brings something of life itself which gives the theatre something new to grow on'. According to him his plays represent something of him. His plays are the means of presenting his personal view of life. They are unique because no one else could offer in quite the same style and form. He regarded a play "as a composition rather than a story, as a distillation of life rather than a narration of it."⁸ Inge was always inspired by perhaps a mood or a memory of the feeling at sometime in the past or a character who seemed to him compelling. A play "may come out of memories or it may come out of one's desire to deal with experience."⁹ He himself admitted the fact that his plays have something which had already

happened in the past.

Inge had been most concerned "with dramatizing something of the dynamism I myself find in human behavior."¹⁰ "William Inge" as author McClure has said "was that of the lingering heart." He addressed the old joys and the old simplicities of life but "his lingering heart ultimately could not cope with life as he knew it near the end."¹¹ He was very sad man. In his last days he also faced the problems of isolation and depression. He also tried to find the solution of his problems in wine and suicide like his characters in his plays. He tried to escape from the stark realities of life.

Inge's interest was human behavior and he investigated the typical behavior of seemingly conventional characters. He was not attracted by the geographical or natural aspects but by the social aspects. Once Inge wrote "may be we find beauty only in what we know Mountains have never intrigued me. They have none of the mystery of the prairie, where one can always feel close to some eternal truth concerning man and his place in the universe."¹² His dialogues are simple and can be understood easily. His characters speak common or ordinary language belonged to Midwestern town. Inge has not used artificial language. He does not follow Tennessee Williams technique of dialogues. Williams has used poetic dialogues while Inge's dialogues have simple words.

Inge's "ear is carefully attend to the dialogue of the people he writes about."¹³

Thus Inge followed Realism. His Realism was successful in explaining psychological insight of the ordinary of people of the Midwest. His personal experience helped him to create effective characters as well as effective themes. His personal experience played an important role to create real characters. Probably the quality attracted the American mass towards theatre and made his plays successful in Broadway. It is true that "every individual represents both a unity of personality and the individual fashioning of that unity. The individual is thus both the picture and the artist. He is the artist of his own personality -----." ¹⁴

However Inge was "a gifted artist, a consummate gentleman, a warm and sensitive creator."

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**(ii) INFLUENCE OF CONTEMPORARY LITERARY
PERSONALITIES AND THEIR WORKS**

Literary influence also helps to form the shape of a good author. Modern American drama began in the second decade of the 20th century. Many brilliant writers contributed to the richness of American drama. Eugene O'Neill, Elmer Rice, Clifford Odet, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller and a lot of other playwrights revolutionized American drama. Inge grew old in the atmosphere of these remarkable playwrights.

In his childhood William Inge used to share the acting experiences of his mother's elder brother Mr. John Gibson who had to give up his career as an artist due to some domestic problems. Inge took admission in Montgomery County High School in Independence in 1927 and participated in the dramatic activities there. He was taken on trips to Kansas City where he saw several plays including 'The Barrets of Wimpole Street' starring Katharine Cornell. He was deeply impressed by her performance. He graduated from high school in 1930 and then attended the university of Kansas. He continued to take part in speech and drama and to give his performances in leading roles in university productions including Androcles and the Lion

and Juno and the Paycock. He acted in tent shows where he played juvenile roles. The experience helped him to learn dealing with small time show business. In his college life he acted in the summer theatre sponsored by the Culver Military Academy and appeared by in plays by Rachel Crothers, J.B. Priestley, Sutton Vane and other modern dramatists. He liked these plays and got the membership of the National Collegiate Players. He submitted his thesis on 'David Belasco and the age of photographic Realism in the American theatre'. He was influenced by Realism because in 1920's and 1930's Realism was the main trend of American drama.

David Belasco was New York's leading showman during the end of the 19th century and early in 20th century. He produced many plays in Broadway theatre. Zaza, The Easiest Way, The Lily, The Return of Peter Gimm, The Case of Becky and others. During the period the drama turned away from the moralistic view point and to deal with the theme of sexual frustration. He also followed Freud's theory to portray human psychology. Inge joined Stephense College Columbia Missourie to teach English composition and dramatics after he had finished his dissertation. In the college he came in contact with Albert Chirst Janer head of Stephese and his wife Virginia.

They became very close friends and "made his years at Stephense more rewarding than they might otherwise have been."¹ These three friends shared their problems, dramas and opinions for the theatre. The couple made Inge think that he was misplaced in teaching. They inspired him to study drama and theatre. In Stephense College he also worked with Miss Maude Adams who had retired to the academic world of Broadway now. Inge liked her very much as an artist of the stage. She used to share her sweet memories of her past stage life which influenced him most. She discussed on Eleanora Duse and Sarah Bernard and other great stars with Inge. Inge found her "to be capable tireless, charming."² He admired her "intelligence and envied her experience."³ Earlier Inge began his career as a teacher. Probably he did not think of being a playwright until he met Tennessee Williams. During World War II he was appointed as drama editor of the St. Louis Star Times in 1943 to take Reed Hynd's place who went overseas with the armed services. He edited the "entertainment and culture page" of the newspaper and wrote criticisms of drama, music, art book and films. In the year of 1944 when Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* was ready for its first performance in Chicago on the stage, Inge requested Williams for an interview for the article "Home Town Boy makegood". Though

Inge had been interested in theatre since his childhood days but his meeting with Tennessee Williams was the turning point of his life. Williams' first hit The Glass Menagerie inspired him to be a successful playwright. He was deeply moved when he saw Williams' The Glass Menagerie. Inge saw it with Williams in Chicago. After the show he was greatly impressed by the beauty of the performance and called the play "the finest thing I'd seen in the theatre in years."⁴ Watching the play Inge felt little ashamed for having lead an in-productive life. These reactions indicated towards his ambition to be a playwright but at first Williams was not sure of it. Later when he came to know his sincerity Williams advised him on the script of his first play Farther off from Heaven. Apparently Williams motivated Inge to produce plays and obviously he was most influenced by Williams as a playwright. Tennessee Williams and William Inge have the same theme of their plays i.e. isolation and sexual frustration. Inge was "a protégé of Tennessee Williams whose plays suggest a kind of domesticated Williams, sensitive and sympathetic studies of lonely and frightened people-----."⁵

The main concern of these two writers is the quest of an individual to achieve harmony with his physical environment leading to emotional as well as material security in life. Williams

and Inge have default with the conflict between reality and illusion in their major plays. Doc and Lola, Madge and Hal, Rosemary and Howard, Bo and Cherie, Rubin and Cora – all these characters face the same problem faced by the characters created by Williams. Like Williams Inge deals with particular family circles in the same Millieu and at the same time. Both of them have the same purpose and ask us to see what we really are and then to make whatever correction there is to be made. 'The need for understanding and tenderness and fortitude among individuals trapped by circumstances' is the concern of both these writers. Like Williams Inge also emphasis on women characters in his plays. Their characters face almost same problems i.e. loneliness, homosexuality and alcoholism and both of the dramatists have used sexuality as a solution to the world's problems. Often Inge suggests that sex is the great leveler as Williams does with Stella and Stanley in *A Streetcar Named Desire*.'

Tennessee Williams' impact is observed in Inge's first successful play Come Back Little Sheba. The character of Turk is his attempt to form the Stanley Kowalski type that 'Williams popularized in A Streetcar Named Desire.' Turk and Stanley are long on bulging biceps short on brains. The plot situation of Inge's second hit play Picnic resembles Williams' Orpheus Descending.

The presentation of repression in the women of Picnic is like that in Tennessee Williams' Summer And Smoke in a minor key. Inge shares with Williams' concept that "no source of comfort however fragile or ephemeral, should be disdained in a frightening and inhospitable World."⁶ The conviction reappears in Inge's another play Bus Stop. It is a light comedy. The last hit play by Inge is The Dark at the Top of the Stairs. The story of the play was derived from his very first play Farther Off from Heaven. Inge wrote the play just after he had watched Williams' The Glass Menagerie. So there are some similarities between them. Both of the plays have autobiographical touch. The character of Reenie in Dark has the shade of Laura in The Glass Menagerie. Reenie like Laura Wingfield "had a physical imperfection of which she was keenly aware. One of her front teeth was broken."⁶ Laura tries to escape from the stark realities of life by means of her glass animals while Reenie uses piano to overlook the fact of life.

Inge's hero like Williams' is physically attractive. He has not the quality of maturity and intelligence. He is dressed in blue jeans, cowboy boots and tee-shirts. He is equipped with bulging biceps and enormous sexual potency."⁷ Like Williams Inge writes she – dramas and gives pivotal roles to his female characters. Arthur Miller, a famous contemporary dramatist of Tennessee

Williams in Broadway wrote serious American drama. Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams dominated the mid-century American drama and they forced history to judge the period by their work. Obviously Inge was also influenced by Miller's technique. In Death of Salesman, Miller shows the failures of the Loman family. He deals with how the family becomes separated and how it fails to communicate. In Dark Rubin faces similar problem. His separation from his children is the result of his feelings of alienation from his society. He wonders how he can offer his children anything when the world so alien to him. Both find common ground with their audience by dealing with matters familiar to middle and lower classes.

Thus William Inge comes closest to in the league of Miller and Williams. The stories of these three dramatists show the chaotic situation of current American drama in the twenty postwar years. Like Williams and Miller, Inge puts his characters face to face "with the compromises which they are forced to make in a society which is at best impassive and which may often be actively malevolent."⁸

Though Williams inspired Inge to write plays, but the study of his plays shows that he was influenced by the techniques of Eugene O'Neill's playwriting. Inge's works are similar to the works

of O'Neill in many ways. Alienation, loneliness and seeking solution of personal problems in love are the characteristics, which are presented by both writers very well. O'Neill characters face difficulties in the modern world. They find problems to adjust in the atmosphere of given world. Like O'Neill Inge has presented domestic realism. His plays take place in homes. Inge has presented the theme of loneliness and personal isolation. The theme is so dominant and so consistently developed as it is in the plays of O'Neill. O'Neill's plays are based on a particular idea of life. To him a man must compromise if life is to have any hope for him. His several plays express external reality as well as internal reality. O'Neill's Beyond the Horizon presents human frustration and The Emperor Jones shows fear stricken life of its characters. Inge's characters also suffer this state of mind. Lola, Rosemary, Grace, Cora, Turk, Dr. Lyman Doc, Sammy and Rubin Flood – all are isolated human beings who are afraid to accept the reality of life. Like O'Neill's characters, Inge's people also struggle to survive in the world. The chief characteristic of O'Neill's presentation is the description of Freudian psychology. Inge has also followed this technique to present deep psychological conditions. O'Neill Mourning Becomes Electra presents Freudian inner turmoil and Different presents a study of sex – inhibited New England spinster.

Welded is a story of isolated couple. All God's Chillum shows a doomed inter racial marriage in which the wife is unable to escape from her husbands blackness. Inge's plays also shows the relationship of husband and wife in which they try to escape from each other's weaknesses. They fear to accept their mistakes. Inge's all successful plays end with a new hope for life. O'Neill and Inge have presented sexually frustrated people. O'Neill's Desire Under Elms, Strange Interlude and Mourning Becomes Electra are the dramas of sex repressions. Inge has also emphasized upon sex in his successful plays. His characters attempt to find the solution of their isolation through sex in the place of real understanding.

O'Neill and Inge both the writers have used the philosophy of love in narrow sense. All their characters seek that all kind of love which can provide them sexual pleasure. They are hungry for physical love and they are not able to understand the spiritual love. Both have used the term 'Love' in materialistic way. O'Neill has presented the Freudian relationship between wife-husband, mother-son, mother-daughter, woman-lover, between daughter-mother-father-lover, between son-mother-father etc. His Anna Christie and Strange Interlude narrate about the relationship between father-daughter and between woman-lover. Inge's Come Back Little Sheba presents the relationship between husband and

wife, between woman and lover and between father and daughter. Picnic deals with the relationship between mother and daughter and woman and lover. In Bus Stop Inge has dealt with the problem of one sided love. The Dark at the Top of the Stairs is a detailed study of the relationship between mother-daughter, mother-son, father-daughter, father-son and husband-wife. Apparently in some degree Inge's themes are inspired by O'Neill's drama. Their characters are incapable to fulfill their romantic dreams.

Inge himself admitted that he had "never been influenced by the Greeks."⁹ Modern dramatists always fascinated him. He found himself close to two Irish writers – Synge and O'Casey and says--- "--- I feel most affiliation I think, with the Irish writers Synge particularly and he is not a very popular writer now, but I feel closer, I think to Synge and some of the early O'Casey."¹⁰

The other two writers who influenced him are Chekhov and Thornton Wilder. Chekhov a famous Russian dramatist of 19th century was considered to be a serious literary writer. He produced his qualitative works late in 19th century. His naturalistic plays became inspiration for the playwright of the early 20th century in American theatre. Inge studied his plays when he was in college. Chekhov was "— a great experience for me, I mean really opened up the whole world for me when I first began writing as a student

back in college.”¹¹ Chekhov wrote of “realistic characters in domestic situation —.”¹² Inge followed the naturalism of Chekhov in his works. Like Chekhovian characters Inge’s men and women want to live and not to die. They seek life and joy.

Inge’s first hit in Broadway Come Back Little Sheba can be considered to have some Chekhovian qualities. John Champman in the New York Daily News of 16th February 1950 thought that the play was “part Chekhov, part Arthur Miller and part the Divine Gospel of Alcoholic Anonymous.”¹³ The climax of the play is also a Chekhovian climax in which Lola finally accepts the fact that Sheba is never coming back. In The Dark at the Top of the Stairs the glimpses of Chekhovian style can be felt. The use of indirect method in the play makes up think of Chekhov in some degree. Thornton Wilder also attracted Inge. He acted in Wilder’s Our Town when he was the student of college. Inge found some thing in Thornton Wilder’s work “that makes me feel, I have been influenced somewhat by him —.”¹⁴ Wilder attempted to portray the life of people in small Midwestern town in America during 20th century. Like Wilder Inge examined the petty frustrations and painful determinism of desperate lives while for the most part celebrating the simple process of life.

Inge was also influenced by Osborne and Pinter. Osborne’s

early plays fascinated him. His On Borrowed Time and Morning's at Seven are important comedies. His characters serve provincialism. Brooks Atkinson called Morning's at Seven original portrait of human folly in which "everyone can see the glimpses of his own reflection."¹⁵ Pinter's Caretaker also moved him profoundly.

Besides the impact of other modern writers can be observed in his plays. In characterization Inge followed Odet's technique in his famous play Bus Stop. He created several characters of equal importance as Clifford Odets did in Awake and Sing. Doc and Lola in Come Back Little Sheba are like Edward and his wife Lavinia in The Cocktail Party of T.S. Eliot who simply resign themselves to making the best of a hopeless situation. Inge's Bus Stop depends upon a confined microcosm. The microcosm is reminiscent in Robert Sherwood's Petrified Forest, and Sebastian Brant's rambling 15th century poem Das Narrenshyff. All these works depend upon "a confined environment, a trap to bring cohesion to their story." The character of Elma Duckworth in Bus Stop is similar to the character of Gabby in Robert Sherwood's The Petrified Forest who gathers the information of the other characters in the play. Like Arthur Laurents Inge has undergone psychoanalysis and is able to utilize its insight without following outworn literary patterns.

Inge also wrote some novels in which he examined small town life in the Midwest. He himself was very fond of reading novels. He read Santayana's The Last Curtain when "I was quite young ----- . It is a beautiful piece of work."¹⁶

Existentialism also influenced him as a playwright. "I feel in my way I am existentialist."¹⁷ He studied the early existentialists Kierkegaard and Pascal. They were religious men. He also studies the French existentialists "who have been atheistic."

He said that the people should not misunderstand the existentialists' concept of life that 'life is worth nothing'. He was also most influenced by Camus' philosophy of the absurd. To him "we have to accept many of the happenings in life as absurd ----- and absurd in the sense that they mean nothing."¹⁸ In addition, he was also influenced by naturalism. He attempted to follow Ibsen and Chekhov in his dramas. He tried to show naturalism in his plays because he was impressed by the naturalistic authors of early 20th century like Eugene O'Neill Tennessee Williams and others.

The most unavoidable factor which influenced Inge was Freudian psychology. The theory was given by a famous psychologist Freud. The Americans were introduced to Freud theory in 1909 by Dr. Ernest Jones who began publishing his theories in journals. Freud's language was German but in 1909 and

1910 his books were translated into English which made him popular in America. The new dramatists in later years adopted his theories to show psychological analysis in their plays. Inge was one of them. Freud's theory show over-emphasis upon sex. Similarly in William Inge's dramas sex is the most important factor. His Come Back Little Sheba proved to be a remarkably well motivated drama with fine suspense and Freudian influence. His other plays also have the impact of the Freudian psychoanalysis.

Thus Inge wrote his plays according to the fashion of contemporary period. He was a literary personality and it was possible that the literary atmosphere of contemporary period had also effected him. But undoubtedly he was a gifted artist.

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(iii) IMPACT OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

According to a well known fact the work of art is considered as a mirror of the society. Literature is a social product and as such it inevitably reflects the life of the era out of which it springs. The greatest literary masterpieces are true to time and space. Literature is the expression of life as a whole but is expressed through the medium of the particular ages and generation of mankind.

Every writer grows up as a member of a particular society and his personality, his view of life and his emotional conflicts and communications are conditioned by social factors. He is likely, moreover, to be generally receptive to those broad currents of thought and feelings, which are shared by the other members of his society. For this reason the contents of his work including its deeper emotional quality as for as its subject matter, cannot be explained without reference to his social background.

Hence the American playwrights were also inspired by the people and society of contemporary period. American drama became completely "American" when it attained full maturity in the plays of Eugene O'Neill, Robert Sharewood Elmer Rice, Sidney

Howard and other Playwrights of 1920's. These playwrights started showing native American manners and Customs, characteristics and ideals, issues and conflicts. Like other culture the American culture is a product of adaptations of the cultures and experience. In 20th century, enormous changes started taking place in American society. The modern dramatists attempted to express the American group mind.

In American drama "America's heart land its sprawling Midwest, has long engaged the interest and imaginative powers of America's most celebrative writers."¹ Some prominent writers including Theodore Dreiser, Edger Lee Masters, Willa Cother, Sinclair Lewis, Sherwood Anderson etc. were attracted by the Midwest or small towns. The writers were taking interest in rural small town people and their lives. They attempted to portray the lives of the people of the heartland in stories and poetry. Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams continued to portray the common American people's lives. William Inge followed their tradition of expressing the frustration, sorrow and suffering of little people.

Before Inge most of the drama were "set in that area presented Midwesterners stereotyped either as a hearty breed of milkmaids and cowpokes... ." ² But Inge was a successful playwright who tried to examine the People's psychological insight of the

Midwest. His plays show small town life on the plains and the prairies of the heartland. He used the Midwest and Freudian psychology as motivational elements in his dramas.

Inge himself belonged to the Midwest. He was born in Independence Kansas, and spent his first thirty five years in the region. So it is obvious that he had observed the small town life closely. He was a provincial man and accepted the fact in an interview. "I am a very provincial man. I have never been abroad."³

Inge grew old at the time when the society was struggling against established social system. The race of the contemporary period was becoming more and more materialistic. The people of the middle class families had a thirst for money and luxurious life. He had observed that modern American people always sought for sexual pleasures. They are sexually frustrated people. Inge has attempted to pose the question of what love means in modern society. His characters face the problems of personal isolation which is both physical and spiritual and "they all have difficulty communicating on any but a superficial level-a common problem among 20th century Americans."⁴

William Inge has 'true and wonderful talent which is for offering first the genial surface of common American life.' As he grew old in small town, he was able to explain his characters

psychology deeply. He himself represented a middle class family and faced a middle class family's problems. His characters struggled to survive in the society. They are simple ordinary people who have no artificiality. Inge liked small town hated big cities like New York : "I just have claustrophobia in New York ----- . I never liked New York. I lose my feelings of identification there ----- . I was born and grew up with the natural world around me."⁵ Small towns and its people always fascinated Inge. Midwest was the real world of the William Inge. To him people exist as individuals in small towns. Everybody knows else's business but not so in cities.

The people of his native town are 'as plain and level and unadorned as the scenery'. The small towns were free from riots, strikes or demonstrations. Inge had great love and affection for his own community and society and his characters always accept who they are. That is why his plays are real rather than ideal. The setting and characterization of his plays suggest that Inge was influenced by his own Midwestern background. He was a keen observer and his plays provide a keen observation of the contemporary society. He observed the region's sociological uniqueness and he knew how the uniqueness could be presented in his plays. His characters are ordinary American people who are 'products of their own compulsions and of the small towns

environment in which they live'.

Inge observed the small town society, where he had resided was a place "where hypocritical standards of middle class morality had a significant effect on most of the citizens."⁶ He has revealed ordinary people's struggle with hidden neuroses and their repression and prejudices. Inge "presented with astounding veracity the oppressive banality of the lives of his characters" and "may justifiably be called the first playwright to examine the Midwest."⁷ Inge's first Broadway hit *Come Back Little Sheba* is "true Americana of a kind that has become rather rare on the stage for the past 10 years or more"⁸ Inge tried to translate a feeling about American lower middle class life to the stage. It is the story of a middle aged and intellectually mismatched couple. The characters Doc, Lola, Marie, Turk and others are the natives of Inge's own small town society. They live lives of quite desperation knowing the fact that their narrow world will not improve yet clinging to hope. The center of the play is a real picture of little repressed people living with all their inhibitions moral confusion, awry ideals and profound isolation in a kind of middle town heart break house. The atmosphere is a "drab spiritual desert" which is lightened by the hopeful ending. Inge's use of effective words to show the rural Midwestern locale indicates towards the influence of contemporary

society on him as : "Marie wears a sheer dainty negligee and smart, feathery Mules on her feet, furniture is heavy and rounded looking and sofa is called a davenport, no industry whatsoever has been spent in making it one of those White Cheerful rooms that we commonly think Kitchen to be."⁹ In *Picnic*, Inge's another successful play, "the even tenor of small town life was interrupted by the arrival of a vital Vagrant, and an American semi-Collegiate Peer Gynt," and he spread a tragical-comical excitement everywhere in a particular group of women. The play describes the story of a group in a small town with Midwestern characters. The characters and the setting of the play are also inspired by the contemporary social atmosphere. It is an intimate and powerful handling of the emotional needs of a group of women in a small monotonous Kansas town. Gassner has called it "a pathetic pastoral."

Inge's conscious concern with dramatizing something of the dynamism of human motivation and behavior is evident in the play.

The contemporary society was the worshipper of physical beauty. The play shows that a beautiful woman may dominate her husband or lover : "A pretty girl ... is the Equal of kings and she

can ... live in a palace”¹⁰ Being a beautiful girl, Madge draws everyone’s attention towards her while she lacks intelligence. Millie, Madge’s sister is the only one who rebels against a society which worships beauty but even she tries to look feminine and beautiful when Hal appears on the scene.

Like an ordinary house wife Flo Owens is always busy in her household work. Her aim of life is to settle down her daughters so she tried to search suitable dates for them. In a small town the people know each other very well. When Howard offers wine to Rosemary, she refuses because being a school teacher, she has some limitation. If she drinks wine the news can break out all over the town : “what if someone’d come by and tell the School Board? I’d lose my job....”¹¹ Thus the school teachers in a small Midwestern town are “expected to be paragons of virtue, upholding the codes of middle-class morality.”

Picnic moves around a particular family like Inge’s earlier play Come Back Little Sheba. Each character in the story has an essence with whom spectator identify themselves. The setting of the play is the porch and yard of a shabby house shows the common features of small town houses in 20th century America. Picnic is a “tragical comical excitement which broke out in the neighborhood provides a fluid drama with provincial life –

humorous, casual, honest."¹²

Inge has written of the power and beauty of Kansas which was not noticed by the outsiders. Picnic "is set against the colorful, sweeping vastness of Kansas skies and fields of grain elevators and busy yards."¹³

In his next play Inge has attempted to portray his own experience of social surrounding, In Bus Stop the action takes place in a street corner restaurant in a country town about thirty miles west of Kansas city. The restaurant, situated between Kansas and Wichita, is an ordinary dingy small-town restaurant where 'scenie calendars and pretty girl posters decorate the solid walls, and illumination comes from to badly shaded light bulbs that hang on a dangling cards from the ceiling, in the center are several quartet tables with chairs for dining at for left is counters with six stools before it...."¹⁴ The description shows his keen observation of contemporary surrounding. Inge got the inspiration for the play from his one trip between St. Louis and Kansas City. It was the time when he was teaching at Stephen's College and usually he rode the bus between St. Louis and Kansas City most weekends. On one trip he found a vagrant young man who was in avid pursuit of a girl whom he did not know and during the journey he usually cuddled beside he and tried to talk her into getting of the bus with

him when they reached Kansas City.

Apparently Inge got the idea for the characters of Bo Decker and Cherie from the trip. The other characters are also simple ordinary people based on his own experience and observation. There is a Kansas Sheriff, a husky bus driver, a scholarly derelict, a rough and ready cowboy, waitresses and nightclub singer. Bo, a provincial character, is a loud mounted cowboy from Timber Hill Montana. Dr. Lyman, Will Masters and Carl are simple easterners who "don't know anything about any of the country west of the Hudson river."¹⁵ Inge has described his characters carefully. He writes "Her (Cherie) origin in the Ozarks and her speech is southern : she sang in the Blue Dragon night club in the stock yards of Kansas City."¹⁶ He mentions the "Menniger Clinic "in Topeka as well as Joplin Missouri and "Kanz City", which reflect a local and regional pronunciation.

Inge's another play The Dark at the Top of the stairs can be said to be a penetrating drama of small town ways. It is an autobiographical play of action although Inge has changed the place of action from his native town Kansas to Oklahoma. Rubin and Cora are not happy with their relationship. They have two children Reenie, of 16 years old and Sonny of 10 years old. Being a middle class girl Reenie has a stress to be a nice girl. Inge's

psychological study of the people around him can be seen in the play. To him the man "in the midst of modern confusion and frightening change needs faith in personal value." Inge's has been successful to show the psychological struggle in the play. The setting of the play and the characters belong to a small town in the early 1920's. Inge's keen observation helped to show the violence and the domestic tirades, the humors and the tenderness and the tears in the small town home of Rubin Flood.

Rubin's house represents the contemporary small town houses where Inge grew old. The play is "a memory Play" so the time and setting, the early 1920's in a small Midwestern town, must have been similar to Inge's surrounding when he was ten years old, the age of Sonny Flood.

The play shows the impact of the changing times and way of life of the twenties upon small town people and upon town itself. Rubin himself admits.

"Times are changing, Cora and I dunno where they're goin."¹⁷ The old pattern of life started vanishing with the discovery of oil. The physical appearance of the town has been changed because new school buildings, churches, country clubs. The ordinary men were becoming millionaires and "drivin' down the

street in big limousines, goin ' out to the country club and getting drunk. acting like they was the lords of creation."¹⁸

A man, belonged to the middle class family, has no option except he should prepare himself for the new circumstances of the contemporary society. Rubin confessed that "a fellow's gotta get into the swim. There's nothing else to do."¹⁹ The Dark at the Top of the Stairs therefore, is a sombre picture a family haunted by prejudices, regrets and unfocused fears, also profit from Inge's knowledge of small town life and his ability to give form to the deep-thought unsensational yearning and quilts of simple people. The critic has considered the play as an honest, gentle portrait of conventionally pathetic individuals. The portrayal of the common people is impossible without the keen observation of the society. In the play he has presented the problems of a family which are not imagined. They are real. He has presented the different psychological problems which are the problems of all middle class people of his surrounding. Ima Honakar Heron considered the play as "a perceptive and tender portrayal of ordinary humanity..."²⁰ Thus Inge's Midwest is a land where the gift of milky happiness is obtained when some obstacle is removed. Inge deals with the problem of sex and violence in Midwest. His Midwestern tone makes him a significant writer.

Inge has tried to deal with all the possible relationship in his plays. We have 'the emasculated husband the frustrated wife the mother fixated child the sexually exploited young man or woman'. Inge's Come Back Little Sheba presents the relationships between husband and wife, between woman and lover and between father and daughter. Picnic describes the relationship between mother and daughter and woman and lover. In Bus Stop Inge has dealt with the relationship of man and woman. The Dark at the Top of the Stairs is a detailed study of the relationships between mother-daughter, mother-son, father-daughter, father-son and husband-wife.

However Inge's plays show the contemporary social changes and their impact in the ordinary people of America's small towns. Most of his characters are based upon his keen objective observation in his earlier life. Inge himself writes that he feels a duty " to find all that I can in the human lives that I know and are available to me... and find the meanings in those lives secondarily."²¹

Inge's presentation of the Midwest society shows both his general understanding of human psychology, and behavior and his experience with feelings relating to psychoanalysis and homosexuality. In his major plays the psychological problems of the

major characters has been presented very carefully. In other words Inge was able to draw upon Freudian insight in his dramas. Inge's female characters are stronger than male characters because he grew old in woman-dominating surrounding and enjoyed the company of many famous and strong woman personalities, like his mother Maude Sarah Gibson, Margo Wood and Margo Jones.

Though Inge's characters and setting belong to his own Midwestern society, he can not be considered a provincial playwright. His themes and characters have universal appeal. The middle class people have same anxieties and dramas all over the world. So his plays are "provincial" with no "provincialism."

Inge therefore, was a man with a sensibility and sensitivity for the lonely, the troubled, the sexually frustrated or the afraid. Apparently, the contemporary people were suffering from the problem like loneliness and sexual frustration. As an author Inge has drawn his subject matter as well as characters from the social atmosphere around him. Inge has presented the society as he experienced and remembered it through out his life. Probably, Inge was successful portraying people of the lower middle class. He seems most convincing when he put his characters in the Midwestern background of the 20's. His "few excursions away from this class, this time and this place have lacked the authenticity that

helped Inge to create his reputation as an accurate recorder of Midwestern life in America, a consummate realist." His "talent lies in his sympathy with and Organic understanding of his people." Inge wrote of the sweetness of character that the people of his contemporary society possessed. In 1968 Inge wrote the Introduction to *The Plains State* which shows his great attachment with his people who lived in his surroundings.

He writes: -

"The Plains States are the heart of our nation and that heart beats slow and sure year after year while the cities on the coast lines, crowded, competitively industrial, 'cosmopolite and more seemingly vulnerable to foreign influences as well as attacked in times of war, manifest our nations violent, anxieties and antagonisms. Nowhere can we find a closer correlation of landscape and character than in the Plains States.'" ²²

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C H A P T E R 3

(i) COME BACK LITTLE SHEBA

William Inge's first successful play was Come Back Little Sheba. It is generally considered as his best play. The play is a story of Doc and Lola a middle aged couple living in dreary semi-respectability in Midwestern city. When the play begins the life of couple is out of romance. Lola is a fat sloven lady who behaves in childish manner. She talks to her husband like a stranger. Her little dog Sheba has been lost but she has a hope that the dog will return someday. She recalls the sweet memories of her youth. Her father selected Doc as a suitor for Lola. He was an ambitious premedical student. During their affair Lola's undestorable pregnancy forced them to marry. Unfortunately Lola lost her capacity to bear children after she suffered from miscarriage of her first child. It is apparent Doc had to spend the money which was kept for his studies. Now a long time has been passed. She feels loneliness and frustration. She does not want to come out from her past. When she desires to go to her father's home, her mother compells her not to come there. The frustration and loneliness inspire her to find company out of her home. Marie, a paying guest of Delaney family is a mean to escape the reality for the couple. Doc's feelings for Marie are the mixture of paternalism and erotic nostalgia. But Lola finds her own image of

youth in her which helps her to escape the reality. Until her approaching marriage to Bruce a prosperous young man, Marie shares her life with her lover Turk who is an athlete.

One day a telegram comes for Marie saying that Bruce is to arrive next day. Lola is happy and ready to welcome Bruce. Turk spends the night with Marie and Doc is deeply upset about it. Doc begins to drink whiskey while he has already given up the habit. His frustrations are translated into a vitriolic and homicidal attack upon Lola. Taken to a hospital he comes back home and begs his wife for forgiveness. Lola finally accepts the loss of her little dog Sheba and promises not to call her any more. Here the dog is the symbol of Lola's past. She also decides to be adequate wife and leave her desire to relive her youth. "I don't Think little Sheba's ever coming back Doc. I am not going to call her any more"(69).¹

(a) Concept of Love -

Thus the play shows the theme of loneliness and frustration which occurs due to the lack of love in human lives. The play describes twentieth century American people who have thirst for physical love.

The main attraction of the play is the character of Lola a thirty eight years old lady who is of talkative nature and tries to

attract everyone through her childish talkathrons. She is a fat sloven and careless lady, she recalls that she was a pretty, charming and romantic girl in her teen age and says to Marie,... "I used to be pretty something like you"(14). Being a beauty queen in high school she was overly protected by her suspicious father. Her approved Doc as a suitor for Lola. But Lola "never liked to sit around the house 'cause the folks always stayed there with us"(31). Lola was a very pretty girl. That is why "lots of other boys called me up for dates ... Sammy Knight ... Hand Biderman ... Dutch McCoy"(31). Simultaneously she blames Doc that he "got jealous every time I went out any place and ever looked at another boy"(31). But Lola saved all her dates for Doc because her father had selected him as a suitable match for her. She "never took a date with any other boy but" with him(32). She enjoyed her affair with Doc. She recalls, "... Remember the first time you kissed me?... we'd been going together all year and you were always so shy. Then for the first time you grabbed me and kissed me. ... you said you'd love me forever and ever" (32). Unfortunately during their affair Lola becomes pregnant before the maturity of their love. Her unexpected pregnancy forced her to marry Doc. It also ruined Doc's career as a medical student. Lola miscarried apparently because she felt too guilty to go a regular check up in the hospital.

She lost her baby and became unable to be pregnant again. She asked Doc to join a job so that she could escape loneliness but he disapproved her proposal.

Now twenty years has been passed. She has lost romance of her marital life she leads a boring life and is mostly depend upon husband for her household works. She admits her fault when she says, "I oughta be gettin' your breakfast, Doc instead of you getting mine" (7). She is avoided by her husband. Her pregnancy before marriage was a shock for her father and ha has not forgiven her till now. That is why she cannot go to her mother's home. As a result she finds herself as Auden writes "Alone and afraid in a world I never made."² She, therefore, searches few pleasure in life through a sweet memories of her youth and with her little dog Sheba. Her puppy is now lost. But she is unable to forget her romantic days of her youth because her present life is out of romance. Doc is not very much interested in her from the romantic point of view. He doesn't like her sloppy and dirty look. So Lola tries to be happy with her past days when she was beautiful and was a date of Doc, "... that was the happiest time of our lives. I'll never forget it" (32). In youth everything was charming as she remarks, "that was a nice spring. The trees were so heavy and green and the air smelled so sweet" (32). The memory of Doc's first touch thrills her but Doc

does not seem to share her memories. He asks her coldly to forget all those days of romance. Doc's unconcerned behavior makes her feel guilty. She thinks Doc is sorry to marry her because he did not know that Lola, a beautiful girl would turn into a fat and sloppy Lady. She is also sorry that she has not been able to maintain herself. Being emotional she admits her love for Doc, "You were the first one Daddy the only one. I'd just if you didn't believe that" (33). She liked him because he was so nice and so proper ... I thought nothing we could do together could ever be wrong – or make us unhappy" (33). It is obvious Lola's undesirable pregnancy was the great mistake of her life which ruined her own life as well as Doc's. Afterwards the loss of her first child was their greatest loss of life. She could save her child if she would have gone to hospital for routine checkup. She admits her mistakes and says; "If we'd gone to a doctor, she would have lived" (33). But she did not go to a doctor because at that time it was not easy for an unmarried mother to face the society. Doc would have been a doctor now if he did not spend his money for education on Lola's treatment. Now Lola suffers from inferiority complex and considers herself as the responsible person of all the miseries of their life. Though Doc says that he does not think so, he attacks on Lola in the drunk scene which proves that Doc also considers Lola as the responsible

person of his troubles.

Thus the lack of love in Lola's life has brought frustration and loneliness for her. She talks to Marie, Turk, the milkman, her next door neighbor etc. to draw their attention towards her. She tries to fulfill her unfulfilled desire through Marie's affair with Turk. She derives a vicarious sexual satisfaction from encouraging their love making. She spies on Turk and Marie while they are making love. Doc says that the act is mean and mischivious but Lola rationalizes her act and remarks, "you watch young people make love in the movies, don't you Doc? There is nothing wrong with that. And I know Marie and I like her and Turk's nice too. They're both so young and pretty. Why shouldn't I watch them?" (38) She welcomes Turk and leaves Marie alone with him in the evening. She doesn't give the telegram of Bruce's arrival to Marie at the presence of Turk so that they could carry on their affair. She herself is attracted by Turk and likes his presence. She appreciates his body and says, "you should be out in Hollywood making these Tarzen movies" (15). Watching Turk's body she was "a little dazed by the spectacle of flesh" (23). Simultaneously Lola is also ready to give a warm welcome to Marie's fiancé Bruce. She cleans and sets up her house for Bruce's welcome. She arranges a grand dinner for them. Lola seems very much concerned with Marie while Marie has room

only for her own pleasure. Without any discussion with Lola, Marie suddenly informs her that she is to leave her home to go with Bruce for their wedding.

Lola, therefore, is entirely avoided by other people. Unluckily she fails to get her parents' love as well as her husband's. Her neighbour Mrs. Coffman has no time to talk with her because unlike Lola she is the mother of seven children. She tries to talk with milkman and postman to escape loneliness. She listens to radio to pass her time. No one is interested in her. That is why she has accepted wrong style of life. She is unable to give birth to a child. But her most notable achievement is that she has been keeping Doc away from the bottles for a long time.

To Lola the main responsible factor of the lack of romance in her life is her lost youth. She fails to accept the reality of life. The little dog Sheba is the symbolic representation of Lola's lost youth and the loss of the dog is synonymous with the passing of her youth. Like Sheba Lola's last 20 years of her youth have "vanished into thin air." She utters the sentence in different occasions repeatedly which shows her inner pain. She is so emotionally immature that she cannot have a stable relationship of any kind with another human being. So she tries to attract others by her talk while others feel boring and they try to get rid off from her as soon

as possible. Perhaps she realizes her faults after Doc's verbal attack on her and Marie's departure with Bruce. She is alone and she realizes that she can get a better life if she changes a little her way of life. She can not go to her father's home because he has rejected him. She cannot leave Doc because she is now a middle aged and sloppy lady. She has no other option except Doc to live with. Apparently it will be better for her to lead a happy life by changing herself. She should love other if she wants love from others. She understands that she and Doc are in great need of each other. She cleans house before Doc comes back from City Hospital, "... you see I've got the place cleaned up just the way you like it" (67). She prepares Doc's favorite dishes. "Come on out in the kitchen and I'll give you a nice big breakfast I'll scramble some eggs ... I'll get your fruit juice ... and I'll light the oven and make you some toast and here's some orange marmalade and ..." (67). For the first time she talks sensibly and tries to understand her husband's likes, dislikes and his needs.

In the beginning Lola seems very careless lady but in the climax of the play a great change can be observed in her. Now she seems willing to renew her relationship with Doc. She is now determined to leave her boring way of life and change herself according to the need of Doc. She reveals Doc her last night dream

in which she sees Olympics, Turk is ready to throw javelin. The man in charge is Lola's father who disqualifies Turk and calls Doc to throw javelin. Doc throws it and it never comes down again. Doc and Lola are about to return home but their little dog Sheba is lost. They tried to find out but fail. Later they see Sheba dead and smeared with mud. Doc says to Lola "we can't stay here, honey, we gotta go on. We Gotta go on" (69). Finally Lola accepts that like her little Sheba, her youth has passed away and there is no use of recalling her youth or little Sheba again. Thus the dream indicates Lola had decided to leave her past and realizes, "I don't think little Sheba's ever coming back, Doc, I'm not going to call her any more" (69).

The second important character of the play is Lola's husband Doc Delaney. His point of view is more mature than Lola. He is a chiropractor. He longed to be a doctor but Lola's pregnancy created economic problems for him and he could not be a doctor. He helps his wife in her domestic works due to her carelessness. He tries to commence Lola that she should forget the past and accept the reality but fails, "Baby, you've got to forget those things that was twenty years ago" (32).

Unlike Lola he would like to forget her past. To him man should live in the present "... we should never feel bad about what's

past. You ——you've got to forget it and live for the present" (33). He also recognizes that his own follies have brought about his ruin. He never complains to Lola but "the deep seated resentment toward her, which he shows when drunk is evidence of a suppressed hatred."³

Their relationship is not bond with love. Doc was forced to accept Lola while he wanted to settle himself as a doctor. He married Lola but now he is neither a doctor nor a successful husband. He is alone because he has lost the contact of friends after he failed to be a doctor. He suffers from frustration yet he is able to control himself. When Lola tells him that she is responsible for his ruined life he says, "No... no Baby. We should never feel bad about what's past... I might be a big M.D. today instead of a Chiropractor. We might had a family to raise and be with us now. I might... have a lot of money if I'd my head and invested carefully, instead of gettin' drunk every night. ...but we don't have any of those things, so what we gotta keep on living, don't we. I can't stop just cause I make few mistakes" (33-34).

He seems liberal and polite in his attitude during his conversation with Lola. Consciously Doc blames his ineptitude for his loneliness but unconsciously he blames Lola. "...you can't even get up in the morning and cook my breakfast ... You wouldn't even

sweep the floor till some bozo comes along to make love to Marie..." (56). It shows Doc's pain because of Lola's avoidance.

Doc seems changed when he comes back from City Hospital after treatment. He apologizes for his behavior and says when he sees her attitude of fear "Honest I'm all right honey, please don't stand there like that ----like I was gonna..."(66). He feels relieved when he comes to know that Marie has gone along with Bruce a nice boy to marry him. He is welcomed by Lola with a clean house and with some of his favourite dishes. Doc's situation seems better in the climax of the play than the beginning. Doc decides to do all that his doctor has prescribed. When Lola tells him about her last dream in which she has seen her Sheba dead he replies, "...I guess she's gone for good" (69). As Lola has accepted that reality of life now Doc's life should be better in future. Doc himself suffered from the loneliness of their estrangement brought about by his vicious treatment of Lola. Besides he faces the harsh treatment of the hospital. So at the end of the play he begs and pleads before Lola and says, "Honey, don't ever leave me. If you do, they'd have to keep me loan that place all the time. I don't know what I said to you what I did...please forgive me...please...please... and I'll try to make everything up" (67). Apparently he does not want to face the suffering again and he is in great need of his wife's care, attention

and love.

Doc's attitude towards Marie is entirely different from his wife's attitude. In the beginning of the play his attitude towards her seems fatherly. He prepares breakfast for her and says, "I'll serve you your breakfast now. Marie and we can eat it together, the two of us" (6-7). Though his wish does not show the intimacy in wrong sense, it is not quite like the wish of a father toward a daughter normally meanwhile Marie represents young womanhood. The way of touching Marie's scarf in her absence also indicates that Doc has some special feelings for her. Doc's attraction towards Marie is natural. Lola is sloppy and middle aged. In contrast Marie had neat appearance and youth. Here Doc's desire to have breakfast alone with the cheerful girl does not show a father's feelings for his daughter. He also missed Lola's youth when he remarks, "Some things should never grow old" (8).

Obviously the young girl's presence soothes his heart. He does not like to Turk's presence in her bedroom because of his attraction towards Marie. Doc hates Turk and thinks that the relationship between Marie and Turk can create unexpected trouble. He wants her wife "...if anything happens to the girl I'll never forgive you" (27). He becomes upset by knowing the fact that Turk has spend the night with her. He returns for the only friendly

thing i.e. the bottle of whiskey. Turk feels Doc is jealous of him but he never shows his jealousy overtly. Doc is very much influenced by his mother. Lola sets up table for the dinner (for Marie and Bruce) with the linen and china which Doc's mother had given her as a wedding present. He shouts at her with the cry "My mother didn't buy those dishes for whores to eat off of" (56) after he drinks whiskey. He speaks out all that he tries to hide normally. His artificial behavior shatters. Doc blames on Lola for his unhappiness but has not left Lola till now because firstly she keeps him away from the drunk tank, secondly he needs Lola for the visible explanation for his lack of success. On return from the hospital he comes closer to Lola because of horrible experience of the hospital.

In the climax Lola takes the charge of all the household works and Doc feels much relieved. He makes new plans of his life has "I thought may be I'd go hunting once in a while... I'll get a big bird dog, too" (68). Consequently he seems willing to change himself for a better and happier life which will be full of love.

Marie is the second most important female figure. She is a student of art and roomer of Delaney family. She is a modern girl with materialistic outlook. She has planned to marry a prosperous man Bruce. She selects him because he belongs to one of the best families in Cincinnati and "...he's got a wonderful personality. He

makes three hundred dollars a month"(13). Bruce is suitable match for her because he is "dependable and... he's gentleman too." (13).

However Bruce lives in Cincinnati far from Marie's school so Marie carries on an affair with Turk a brainless muscleman. She rationalizes her relationship with Turk by saying that she cannot live alone without pleasures only because Bruce is not with her. She finds a substitution of Bruce in Turk. When Lola asks her whether Bruce will like it she answers, "Bruce and I had a very businesslike understanding before I left for school that we weren't goin' to sit around lonely just because we were separated" (50). She uses Turk as a means of getting physical satisfaction even she shares the night with him just a day before Bruce's arrival. But she is not serious about him because "He's had his eye on a pretty little Spanish girl in his history class for a long time. I like Turk but he's not the marrying kind"(50). She does not bother how he will feel when he faces Bruce. She tells Lola that "he may be sore for a little while but he'll get over it"(50).

To her Turk is a man who can provide sexual pleasure to her as she desires. She likes him too but cannot marry him because his behaviour and language are rough and rude. Moreover he is not a wealthy person like Bruce. In contrast Bruce

has the quality to satisfy the needs of a wife as Marie says : "...after I graduate from college and he feels he can support a wife and children"(13) they will marry. Apparently Turk can provide sexual pleasure to a woman but he is unable to satisfy a wife's needs while Bruce has wealth to keep a beautiful wife happy.

Marie is a boarder in the house of Doc and Lola. In first instance the love of Doc and Lola for Marie seems parental. Lola sees her own baby's image in Marie because it would have been able to go to college now if they succeeded to save its life. She is like a surrogate daughter for both of them. Marie also considers them as her parents when she says, "you've been like a father and mother to me. I appreciate it"(12). To Lola Marie is a means to escape from the reality of life. She is very friendly to her. She enjoys Marie – Turk affair and encourages their affair indirectly. She also welcomes Bruce warmly. In the play Marie represents Lola's youth. On the other hand in Marie Doc finds all that what he missed in Lola. Marie is young, slim, beautiful and active. Doc likes her company. Marie is entirely ignorant of Doc's special love for her. When Turk doubts regarding his attitude with Marie, she says, "...Turk, don't be silly. Doc is nice to me. It's just in a few little things he does like fixing me breakfast, but he's nice to everyone" (39). Further she adds if Doc enjoys her company or "if he gets any

fun out of being nice to me, why not? (39)

Marie is, therefore, an important factor in the play, and Doc turns to drunk tank when Doc's desire and jealousy for her reaches in crisis stage. Though Doc tries to repress his sentiments but Marie enjoys her life. She welcomes Bruce warmly, shares dinner and goes for outing. When she returns, she tells Lola that she is going to leave her house because she and Bruce has planned to marry soon. She leaves Lola's home without knowing that Doc is admitted in the hospital. She does not wait for him because she is in hurry to go with Bruce and fulfil her dreams : "We're going down to town and have our breakfast, then do a little shopping and catch our plane" (63). She also thanks Lola for her help and says, "Mrs. Delaney, I sure hate to say goodbye to you. You've been so wonderful to me. But Bruce says, I...come and visit you once in a while" (63). Thus Marie goes with the hope of a happy life.

Turk, Marie's lover, is an important character in the play. He attracts females by his overwhelming sexuality. He has well maintained body. Marie comments that he is the best male model. Having good physique, he is very conscious regarding his body and "his body is something he takes very much for granted" (23). He knows well what a woman needs. He talks very frankly about sex. Being a sportsman he is capable of providing sheer animal

friendship. For Adler training in friendship is a good preparation for marriage. But the interference of a strict father in her life has kept her away from having a social life and knowing what the outside world was like. She feels cheated out of many things in her life. These two people fall for each other, break the moral code and end up married life long before they faced the reality of their true selves. Lola and Doc are separated from each other by years of faulty communication or no communication at all. The interest in the partner, 'more than in oneself' is missing from this link. They do not know each other well enough; neither do they try to know. On many occasions Doc chides Lola for being "crude" but there is no warmth of love or understanding in these chiding. Lola too does not feel hurt at the reprimand, but is indifferent to it. The Marie – Turk alliance which shatters Doc's ideals results in the drunk Doc attacking Lola with hatchet. This breaks the twenty years old wall of indifference between them. Lola is forced to review her past life – a life which generally has been filled with a long time of rejections. She realizes that they have wasted an important part of life without the essence of love. Both Lola and Doc become aware of what a marriage bond entails. Lola decides to take upon her wifely duties and to stop hankering after her lost youth. The warm welcome she accords to Doc is a real beginning of their marriage in the true

sense of the term. Doc who goes once more to get his alcoholism is cured and returns home as a changed man. He is humbly conscious of his need for Lola and pleads with her "Honey don't ever leave me. Please don't ever leave me" (67). Lola's answer to this plea is the gleaming kitchen and the well laid table. From the beginning the relationship between Lola and Doc is formal not emotional. They are too polite to be angry with each other. From the opening scene up to the climax Marie is the focal point of the action. Their differences can be observed when they talk about Marie. Their controversy becomes more explicit when Lola calls Doc "come and look Daddy" to watch the love making of the young couple and Doc scolds his wife for snooping. Doc restarts to drink whisky after a long period because of Marie's relationship with Turk. In the climax Marie, a source of controversy is gone with Bruce and they talk regarding their own future. A sense of companionship is generated by their thoughtfulness of each other and "perhaps they will learn from what they have suffered."⁴ After separation they realize the significance of their partners in their lives.

(b) EMPHASIS UPON SEX :-

The term sex is an important part of Inge's plays. He

has always used the term love and sex synonymously. His characters suffers from the hunger of sexual love. Though Come Back Little Sheba does not highlight the sexual relationship widely, it describes the importance of sex in 20th century American society. The play is the "study in contrasts between the erotic satisfaction of the young lover, Marie and Turk and the bleak, frustration which is all life offers the middle aged couple, Doc and Lola."⁵ The life of Doc and Lola started with sexual relationship. Lola's father selected Doc as her date. Doc and Lola got married because their first sexual relationship resulted in Lola's pregnancy. But psychologically the couple was not prepared for the marriage. They always feel guilty for their wedding. They could not continue their relationship in romantic mood. They seem as they are bearing their lives in place of enjoying it. They search few pleasures through their lodge Marie. Marie's boyfriend attracts Lola because he can provide sexual pleasures as she likes. Sexually Lola seems unsatisfied when she comments on Doc saying, Doc "treats women like they were all beautiful angles. We went together a whole year before he even kissed me" (48). Unlike Doc Turk, as Inge himself reveals, is a "big, husky, good looking boy ... He has the openness, the generosity, vigour and health of youth ... He wears faded dungarees and T-shirt"⁶ attracts Lola. He has bulging biceps, he is

all animal and he flutters female pulses by his overwhelming sexuality. His behaviour, is rude and immatured yet commanding. Lola likes Turk because he "reminds me as a boy I used to know in high school, Dutch Mc Coy" (12). Turk is capable to arouse Lola's suppressed sexual desires and she spys on his love making with Marie.

In her entire life she has experienced only Doc sexually and she is unsatisfied. She has not got the sort of pleasures she wishes. Being monogamous she feels cheated that she has not known anyone sexually except Doc. Doc objects on Turk's relationship with Marie while Lola likes him because he has the quality to satisfy a woman's sexual needs. Doc is worried about Marie who is "too nice to be wasting her time with him"(29) while Lola revels in the fact that she has seen Marie kissing Turk "like he was "Rudolph Valentino" (10). Doc regards Marie as an embodiment of that chastity which man idealizes in woman by saying, "I just like to believe that young people like her are clean and decent..."(11). In contrast for Lola Marie is the recipient of that sexual satisfaction of which women dreams and she remarks, "I never saw Marie object to any of the love - making(10) with Turk." Her husband was chosen by her strict father not by her. So she "never had any fun at all until I met Doc... Doc was the first boy my

dad ever let me go out with" (14). She never talks about her sexual needs openly because she cannot acknowledge her feeling to herself due to the puritanical standards by which she was raised. Thus Lola is a sexually frustrated character. She is a fat sloven and untrained lady. Nobody is interested in her. She talks to everyone available around her to remove her frustration. Lola's sexual frustration reaches in peak point when she peeks at Marie and Turk while they are making love and says, "Little Sheba... come back ...comeback, Little Sheba Come Back" (42). Obviously she is calling her youth and romance of her life. Doc is also not satisfied with his wife. His attraction towards Marie shows that he likes well maintained personality and cleanliness. He keeps himself busy in his work to remove frustration. His attitude towards Lola is too polite to be real. He does not like Lola's appearance as well as attitude. His attraction for Marie is because Marie has all what Lola lacks. But it is too difficult for Doc to leave Lola. He himself is responsible for her ruined life. Doc drinks whisky to remove frustration. However Doc is able to control himself.

Marie is a modern character of 20th century America. She thinks practically. She makes relation with Turk because he has a handsome and muscleman's personality. Turk can provide her the sort of sexual pleasures which Bruce, her fiancé can not. Moreover

Analysis at the end of the each chapter so far I have analyzed the plot, character and dialogue with reference to love and sex in the drama. In conclusion I wish to pin point the main ideas of Inge in his dramas as regards love and sex. In Come Back Little Sheba the dramatist has considered love and sex from different point of view. He is in agreement with legal sex but seems to condemn illegal love. That is why Doc and Lola do not go out to fulfil their sexual needs, though Marie makes relationship with Turk, she tries to hide her affair. She is conscious that she is doing wrong. She asks Lola "did... Doc ever say anything to you about Turk... and me?" (49) In European countries the parents have no say in the marriage of their sons and daughters. They themselves negotiate with one another for marriage. This begins with dating, in the play Lola's father, is very strict regarding Lola's friendship even though he sends Lola with Doc in dating. Later he becomes her husband because of unexpected pregnancy. Apparently dating was a common practice in American society as Lola comments : "Lots of other boys called me up for dates... Sammy Knight ... Hand Biderman ... Dutch McCoy(31).

Young men and girls are attracted to one another by various factors as physical beauty, educational social and economic status. This marks the beginning of love and sex .Inge has referred to

dating in his drama. It appears that this is approved by Inge. So there is some discussion about dating.

Then, the next point covered by Inge is marital relationship and extra marital relationship. He has considered various factors which conducive to a happy family life and also considered factors which make married life unhappy. There is both love and sex in the sense. In Come Back Little Sheba the relationship between Lola and Doc is not bound with love but necessity. Lola is not in position to begin extra marital affair while Doc is attracted by Marie though his affair is one sided. It would be converted into Doc's extra marital affair because of Lola's carelessness and ignorance. But Marie is already engaged with Turk. Therefore love and sex are the mortar of a happy marital life. Lola's barrenness is also responsible to their unhappy marital status. The lives of Doc and Lola are not 'radiant with happiness and achievement, but they have found together a way to survive.'

1. Page reference to Come Back Little Sheba will be to the version in 4 plays by William Inge. Random House. New York 1958.
2. R. Baird Shuman, William Inge, Twayne Publishers Inc. Boston 1965. P.41
3. Winifred L. Dusenbury, The Theme of Loneliness in Modern American Drama Grains Ville University of Florida Press. 1960. P.11
4. W. David Sievers, Freud on Broadway Cooper Square Publishers Inc. New York 1955 P.353
5. Winifred L. Dusenbury, The Theme of Loneliness in Modern American Drama Grains Ville University of Florida Press. 1960. P.353
6. Ibid.

(ii) PICNIC

After a 'smash hit' Inge repeated the success in the next play Picnic. The play has a larger number of characters than Come Back Little Sheba. The characters are strong and the dramatic progression of Picnic is controlled by them.

The action of Picnic takes place in a Kansas town on labour Day. A woman of forty years, named Flo Owens has two young daughters Madge and Millie. Madge is eighteen years old and Millie is sixteen years old. Madge is a beautiful girl while Millie is intelligent. Helen potts is their neighbour who lives with her aged mother. She is a widow because her husband was killed in war. Alan Seymour is a rich boy who has been dating with Madge but Madge is not interested to marry him. Hal Carter appears in the play as a close friend of Alan. Mrs. Owen selects Hal for Millie but Hal express his ignorance of behavior with good girls in dating. Rosemary Sidney a middle aged lady is a spinster school teacher who boards with Owen family. The next day when Hal is waiting for Alan to go on the picnic Rosemary emphasizes him to dance. Hal feels uncomfortable with her. She drinks and starts to shout now Hal is too shocked to stay there. It arises sympathy in Madge for Hal and they are attracted to each other. They do not go on the picnic. Hal takes her upstairs and she accepts his proposal of love.

On the following day Hal disappeared. Owen's family comes to know that he is accused of stealing the car of Alan's father. Later he comes back to say good bye to Madge. At the end Madge follows Hal for an unknown future despite her mother's request not to go with him. On the other hand Rosemary Sidney goes with Howard to settle down in marital life.

(a) CONCEPT OF LOVE :-

In Picnic Inge has used the theme of love and sex freely. The two aspects seem closely related in the play. Picnic takes place in a small Kansas town Madge and Hal are the leading characters who fully progress in the first act. Madge is the eldest and beautiful daughter of Flo Owens She is not good at studies and has already left the school. Her mother has chosen Alan as a suitable match for her so that she can settle in her married life. But Madge herself was not so interested in him. She feel uncomfortable with Alan and his friends because they belong to a rich families : "...but all of Alan's friends talk about college and trip to Europe. I feel left out"(81).¹

She thinks she is not their equal. She is entirely ignorant about college life and European countries. As Shuman has said Madge "suffers from 'Marilyn Monroe problem'- she fears people

appreciate her only for her beauty..."² In contrast her younger sister Millie she is an intelligent girl. Madge feels jealous about Millie's intelligence. She lacks confidence and asks her mother. "What good is to be pretty?" (84).

A lot of appreciations regarding her beauty by Alan as well as other people arises fear in her and disturb her. Alan looks at her as a beautiful object or a showpiece. Alan is happy when Madge goes with her for dating because he has the company of the most beautiful girl of the town and other boys feel jealous of him. But Madge complains that she is tired of being looked at and "... it's no good just being pretty" (84). In a conversation with her mother Madge admits that Alan tries to go beyond kissing when they are together. But he never gets upset when Madge refuses from making love because he is "not like most boys. He doesn't want a do anything he'd sorry for" (80). She also admits that she likes when he kisses her. Madge's love for Alan is forced by her mother, she says, "I certainly wouldn't say he was 'the cutest thing I ever saw'" (103). Alan's personality does not appeal to her. Though her mother plans her marriage and "she talks of escape of being rescued like the beautiful maiden in the fairy tale."³ Early in the play Madge dreams about her prince charming who might come by the incoming train into town. But he will not marry her. Rather "he will find that she is

person he is looking for to do some social meaningful work in Washington and he will spirit her away to do that work.”⁴

She finds something attractive in Hal's personality. To her he is able to understand her feeling and needs. She appreciates him; "...you're young and... you're very entertaining. I mean... you say all sorts of witty things, and I just loved listening to you talk. And you're strong and you're very good looking" (126). She hears about his past life patiently and reacts positively. Her sympathy is with Hal because he has passed his life without love of his parents. His life is full of struggle. She shares his feelings after Rosemary insults him. She tries to heal the wound of his heart. She surrenders herself before Hal in flow of emotions. Later she realizes her mistake- "I didn't even know what was happening and then... all of a sudden, it seems like my whole life was changed" (132).

In the last act when Hal comes back to say good-bye to her she talks to him rudely. She suppresses her feelings for Hal in her mother's presence. But finally she comes out of her hesitation and her mother's fear. She admits that "I... I did like you... the first time I saw you" (142). Since the relationship between Madge and Hal has lasted for short period, she is unable to trust Hal's love for her. She thinks that he had merely made physical relationship with her. He has no passion for her and after some times he will forget her.

Her doubt is clear when she says. "You make love to lots of girls... just you made love to me last night" (143).

Madge refuses to go with Hal to Tulsa for beginning a life because of two reasons-firstly, she does not want to leave her mother because she has been struggling for a long period to give a comfortable life to her daughters. She wants Madge to settle with Alan so Madge dare not shatter her mother's dreams. Secondly she is not confident on Hal's acceptance of love. Being a cowboy Hal has not a good reputation in the society. But Madge comes to realize the intensity of love after he leaves for the Tulsa by a train. Now she has two options – her mother Flo or Hal. She loves both of them. Ultimately she finds herself unable to overcome her feeling for Hal and she chooses Hal in place of her mother. It is not easy for her to take a decision in favour of Hal because it would ruin her mother's heart as well as her plans for future but she is helpless and she wails: "Oh! Mom what can you do with the love you feel? Where is there you can take it" (144). She understands her mother's situation well; "I know how you feel but I don't know what else to do" (146). Flo tries to weaken her by telling a dark and uncertain future of Hal but she doesn't move and says firmly, "I've thought of all those things" (147). Madge decides to go Tulsa which is entirely an unknown place for her. It is not easy for a lonely girl to

go in a strange place to settle there. The real struggle of her life begins when the play ends whether she succeeds to find Hal in Tulsa or not. In both condition she has to face stark realities of life. Definitely she is unsuccessful in love because her love story ends when Hal and Madge have to separate from each other in unfavourable circumstances. Her love story can proceed further when she finds him in Tulsa.

Hal, a friend of Alan is very handsome and attractive boy. His background is not good. His father was died when he was in the prison. Hal had to leave college for academic inadequacy. He passed sometime in the reformatory because his mother did not care for him. About his physical appearance Shuman writes: "Inge gives Hal trapping of a surface virility – a dirty T-shirt, blue jeans, cowboy looks and a great hairy chest that holds immense fascination for the women in the play."⁵

The very first meeting of Hal and Madge takes place in her house when the bomber tries to grab Madge's arm forcibly. Hal gives ultimatum to him and he runs away. Madge's mother Flo does not like his presence there. But when she comes to know that Hal is a friend of Alan she gets ready to fix Millie's date with him in the picnic. Hal does not want to go on picnic because in his childhood he was always busy in shooting craps or stealing milk

bottles. When Alan convinces him to worry about nothing he says: "I wasn't brought up proper like you. I won't know how to act around all these women" (101). Hal fears because he has never been in company of good women. Though he has been with a lot of women, but they all were bad and characterless women. He is entirely ignorant how to behave with good women. He does not want to go with them because "...these are... nice women. What if I say the wrong word or may be my stomach grows? I feel funny" (101).

In the evening of labour Day Hal joins Howard, the friend of Rosemary in drinking wine. Howard tells him that he also comes there to see Madge's beauty. For the first time Hal express his real thought regarding Madge, "She's the kind of girl a guy's gotta respect" (116). Apparently he is also attracted by her. Suddenly Millie and Rosemary enter in the yard. They start dancing. Hal is a good dancer and tries to tell some steps of dance to Millie but she is unable to do the steps properly. On the other hand Madge does the same steps very well. Hal goes towards Madge and takes her in his arms. For the first time both touch each other. They start dancing and their dance has "something of the nature of a primitive rite that would mate the two young people" (120). The dance affects everyboy around there. It arouses Rosemary's suppressed sexual

desires. She wants to dance with Hal but he feels uncomfortable with her. Being unsatisfied Rosemary insults and blames him that he has inspired Marie to drink whiskey. Hal gets hurt by Rosemary's verbal attack but it arouses sympathy in Madge's heart for Hal and precipitates the Hal - Madge affair.

When Hal feels Madge's attraction towards him he tells about his bad past. To him he has been in a reformatory for a year. He was also charged for stealing another guy's motorcycle. His mother did not care for him. When he came out of the reformatory "... the old lady's sorry to see me back. Yah! She's got herself a new boy friend and I'm in the way" (126). Apparently Hal's life was full of sorrows. He never felt any kind of love. He never shared his sorrows with anybody else. After the confession Hal leaves the decision on her: "If you wanta faint – or get sick – or run in the house and lock the doors – go ahead. I din't stopping you"(127). But unexpectedly Madge takes his face in her hands and kisses him. Now Hal's emotion bursts out and he picks her up in his arms and goes out. They do not go to the picnic but pass the night together.

In act III (scene 1) Hal and Madge reappear in the stage. Madge is sobbing and Hal is very upset on her reaction and says; "Please baby. If I thought I'd done anything to make you unhappy, I

----- I'd almost wanta die" (132). He is very anxious about Madge's future. He fears that her mother would not treat her rightly. He is also sorry because he has cheated Alan by making sexual relationship with his beloved : "Jesus I'd forget all about Seymour. - I can't go back to his house. What'll I do?" (132). Hal finds himself incapable to leave Madge. He feels real love for her for the first time in life. He finds sympathy for him in her. He asks her "Baby - would you kiss me good night --- may be? Just one time" (133).

He also promises her not to touch while she will be kissing. But he breaks his promise when she starts to kiss him because of his uncontrolled passion. In act III (scene 2) Hal again appears on the stage. This time the situation is changed. Alan's father has accused him of stealing his car. The police is chasing him. He comes back to Madge to say good bye because he is going to another town Tulsa. so that he can save himself from the cops. He is feeling sad to leave Madge : "...I can always get a job hoppin' bells at the hotel Mayo. Jesus I hate to say good-bye" (141).

Madge does not react properly in the presence of Flo and Alan. Hal becomes impatient with her. He recalls his first experience with her : "...you were sittin' there beside me lookin' so pretty sayin all those sweet things, and I... I thought you liked me too, baby. Honest I did" (142). He confesses that he has made love

with a few girls before Madge but the night with Madge was different. Before Madge he never felt emotions in love while Madge has provided all that he wants. His love for Madge was inspired by heart not by his physical need. He recalls: "Last night was... inspired....The way you sat there knowin' just how I felt. The way you held my hand and talked. ...you're d a woman baby.... You're a real live woman." (143). He asks her whether she loves him. When Madge admits her love for him, he asks her to come with him so that they can begin their life together: "...come with me, baby. They gimme a room in the basement of the hotel. It's kinda crummy but we could share it till we found something better" (143).

Hal understands Madge's situation. She is highly confused. Hal asks her to leave her mother and join him. He also knows that she does not love Alan while she is really in love with him. He says when he leaves her : "when you hear that a train pulled out a town and know I'm on it your little heart's gonna be busted 'cause you love me. God damn it you love me, you love me, you love me" (143).

Hal's love begins with physical relationship which takes place just after first proper meeting. But his love affair ends in unsatisfactory condition. He leaves Madge helpless and in pitiable condition. His future is also dark as the police of the town is chasing

him because of theft. He is jobless and unable to provide material security to his beloved. He fails to take Madge with him. Hal's earlier life can be said to be a barren life. Before Madge he never felt the passion of love. He never experienced any kind of love. His father was not a good man. He died when he was in jail. Hal's mother went with another boyfriend and he became homeless. He spent some time in reform school because of stealing a boy's motorcycle. His father left a bill for him but his mother "the old lady gonna have him declared insane so she could take over. I left her have it"(24). He did all types of job for earning money. He made sexual relationship with many girls. Now he want to change himself. He wants to do some respectable job. He has a dream for future: "...oh, something in a nice office where I can wear a tie and have a sweet little secretary and talk over the telephone about enterprises and things... if I just had the chance, I could set the world on"(94-95). As a human being, Hal is a nice fellow. He is very grateful to Mrs. Helen Potts who has given him shelter and foods in his need: "This little lady, she took pity on me when I was practically starving. I ran into some hard luck when I was travelin'. Some characters robbed me of every cent I had" (109). He also tells Madge everything regarding his life when he feels that she is attracted towards him. He does not try to deceive her.

Hal has been struggling from his childhood for survival. He never found anybody around him who could take care of him. He has been a neglected person. He becomes desperate when he says: "I gotta get some place in world, Seymour. I got to" (95). He hear some words of sympathy from Madge and he feels that there is someone in the world who cares for him. There is someone who likes him and loves him. He is not alone and a neglected person. He can share his sorrows and happiness with her.

Hal finds a companion in Madge. Unlike Alan he does not praise her beauty every time. He tries to understand her as a human being and her feelings. In his last meeting with Madge he insists on her to admit her love for him before others. He has lost every thing in his life but this time he does not want to lose Madge. He seems determined when he says "I a poor bastard baby. I've gotta claim the things in this life that're mine" (143).

However that he is a cowboy and he has done all those things which a cowboy does he accepts all his short comings before Madge because he is honest in love. Though he is not a so called civilized man yet he never tries to deceive Madge. The first step is taken by Madge by herself towards him. In the play it is obvious that he wants to get rid off from his past. He dreams to lead a life of a civilized person when he says : "...something in a nice

office where I can wear a tie and have a sweet little secretary and talk over the telephone about enterprises and things" (24).

He wants a respectable place in the society as well as in the world. Madge gives respect and sympathy for him. For the first time someone cares for him when he was badly hurt by Rosemary. The love between Hal and Madge takes place because of the intensity of passion and Hal seems willing to convey the relationship for the whole life.

Alan Seymour is the son of a well to do local banker. He has had a date with Madge for a long period. Mrs. Owens likes him and plans he should be her life partner. But there is a cultural gap between Madge and Alan. They belong to different backgrounds. He has an inferiority complex because he has never been successful with girls. At school pretty girls kept themselves away from him. They had no time for the boys like Alan. Alan could not get a date with any one of them because "if you wanted a date with them you had to call them a month in advance" (100).

He rationalizes that he was too busy with his studies to care about girls. Despite the gap in status between him and Madge, Alan is convinced that he loves her because he "never found a girl I liked" (100). He is also not confident of Madge's love for him. He says to Madge, "I...I hope you do care for me Madge" (100).

Because of this inferiority complex he is unable to believe that the most beautiful girl of the town can love him. He says that he "honestly never believed that a girl like you could care for me" (100). He doesn't mind if Madge refuses him to go beyond kissing in lonely places. He is quite satisfied because the most beautiful girl of the town has given him a date. Alan values Madge for her beauty. He does not appreciate Madge as a human being but he always talks about her beauty. He does not care for her feelings. There is no intimacy in their talk. Alan says, "... I don't care if you're real or not. You're prettiest girl I ever saw" (101). For Alan Madge was a beautiful object who adds beauty to his reputation.

Though Alan is engaged with Madge his relationship seems unstable with her. Alan's father wants him to continue his studies. So he will not be able to marry until he has completed his studies and possibly Alan will outgrow Madge by that time. Therefore Alan's love for Madge is not inspired by heart. His love can not be said to be true love because he never tries to know what she thinks. He fails to understand his beloved. He is unable to understand Madge's needs and desire. So he is an unsuccessful lover. He is disappointed and beaten when he recalls his past love—"Madge is beautiful. It made me feel so proud – just to look at her – and tell myself she's mine" (144).

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Rosemary is another important character of the play whose youth has gone. She has led a life of moral restraint and sexual frustration. Through the character of Rosemary Inge has tried to show his own experience when he taught in small Midwestern town. Rosemary is one of the most successful and memorable portrayals. She is alone and unmarried. She wants to marry but she has not got a suitable match : "Each year I keep tellin' myself is the last. Something'll happen. Then nothing ever does except I get a little crazier all the time" (130).

She boards with Owens family. She is a middle aged lady. Inge selects Labour Day for picnic, the end of summer which signifies the end of Rosemary's youth. For Rosemary the day has special meaning because it is her last day of summer before school opens and she has the last chance to find love before her youth fades entirely. Every year she tries hard to find out a suitable match for her so that she can settle down and leave her boring job of teaching.

The character of Rosemary has the similarity with Lola of Come Back Little Sheba. Like Lola Rosemary is unable to accept the fact that her youth has gone and now she is a middle aged lady. The signs of growing age can be seen on her face. Her disappointment is obvious when she comments on sunset : "It's like

the daytime didn't want to end, isn't" (133). She also recalls her youth when she watches Madge : "... when I was a girl I was just as good looking as she is!" (117).

she lives in fancy to escape from the reality. Watching the dance of Hal her youth returns in reverie, "At school kids all called the Dancin' Fool. ...one night I went dancin' at a big Valentine party. I danced so hard I swooned" (118).

Rosemary also recalls her love when a cowboy was in love with her : "cause I was an older woman and had some sense. Took me up in the mountains one night and made love. Wanted me to marry him right there on the mountain top" (121).

Rosemary's age of making love has gone away. Her society was the society before the era of women's rights and sexual liberation. Being a school teacher she leads an ideal life in a small town. She cannot do any thing which may be harmful for her image. She 'seethes with an inner tumult quite common to the people in her situation at her age.' Now she is not in a condition to make love like a young girl though she is unable to come out of the fascination of her youth. She has to suppress her sexual desires among the people. Hal's presence arises her passion. She agrees with her land lady Flo that Helen Potts should make Hal put on his shirt when he is working around the yard: "...he's working over there

with his shirt off. I don't think that's right in the presence of ladies" (85). The sight of his bare flesh and hairy chest rewinds her passion. It becomes uncontrolled during the dance of Madge and Hal. She asks Howard, "Can't you dance that way?" (120). She wants to dance with Hal like Madge. Hal feels uncomfortable with her. Finally she gets upset and her awakened sexuality forced her to be rude with Hal. She blames him that he has encouraged Marie to drink wine. Her awakened sexuality also turned her to think about Howard. Seriously. In the beginning probably Rosemary does not consider him a boyfriend when she say, "Howard's just a friend – boy – not a boyfriend" (85).

Rosemary is a financially self dependent woman. She has never felt a need of man because of it till now, She seems confused and unsatisfied with spinsterhood when she says : "shoot! I lived this long with out a man. I don't see what's to keep me from getting on without one" (85).

But at her middle age she begins to feel loneliness which can be removed by a life long companion. She has realized that a boyfriend cannot satisfy her for ever. Dating and taking dinner with friends is not the solution of her problems. She needs love and attention of someone who can be easily got after marriage. Though the relationship between Rosemary and Howard is not bound with

love, she selects Howard as her life partner because he is the best surrogate available to her. Hal raises her passion but she selects Howard because she has no other option. Howard is the last chance for her. She has passed half of her life unmarried. Now she has more thirty years to teach a boring life unless she marries. Marriage will provide her a better life than a life of an unmarried teacher so she should marry someone whether she loves him or not. But the marriage will provide her 'atleast her own home to live in and someone to share life with'.

Rosemary's relationship with Howard is entirely based on compromise. After marriage she will probably spend the rest of her life with Howard but their marital life will not be different from the life of Lola and Doc in Come Back Little Sheba. Rosemary's compromise also highlights the main theme of Inge's writing i.e. in the society the men and women are forced to compromise to get rid off from a lonely life. Rosemary compromises by marrying a person whom she likes to pass her time but does not love passionately.

In the beginning of the play Rosemary's personality seems a rigid personality. She leaves it quickly to marry Howard so that she can go through the rest life without loneliness. Earlier she exposes herself as brave and independent lady but the pose shatters when she begs Howard to marry her. It shows that her brave and

independent pose is nothing but a pose. She leaves it because she needs someone. When Howard asks her to put her proposal politely saying 'Please', she follows his statement and says, "Oh God! Please marry me, Howard please... please ... please" (131).

Howard was not much interested in Rosemary. To him it was too late to marry her. Rosemary also agrees with Howard's statement that both had formed their own ways. Further she adds that they should change their way of life for each other so that they can have a better life in future because, "...it's no good livin' like this, in rented rooms, meetin' a bunch of old maids for supper every night, then comin' back home alone" (130).

Now Rosemary's decision to marry is a firm decision. When Howard reminds her that the people of their society will not accept their marriage happily, she says, "To hell with what people say"(129). Therefore Rosemary is not in the mood of missing the golden opportunity to catch Howard. She has no other option better than Howard. So she goes with him to begin a new and a better life.

Mrs. Flo Owen is a middle aged lady and the mother of two young girls – Madge eighteen years old and Millie sixteen years old. Her husband has left her and now she is alone to worry about her children. She wants to settle her daughter in good life. So she selects a rich boy Alan for her eldest daughter. The relationship

between Madge and Alan is inspired and encouraged by her. She talks frankly with her daughter regarding the relationship with Alan.

Flo has bitter feelings regarding love as she was deceived by her husband in love. She says : "Some women are humiliated to love a man" (83). She suffers from insecurity complex because in youth her handsome, lovable and irresponsible husband left her with two kids to struggle with life herself. She is without her address. Therefore she wants to give her daughters secure and safe life. She fell in love and ruined her life. She took decision by heart not by mind. But now her point of view regarding love has been materialistic and practical. She wants her daughters to use their qualities for a good and comfortable life. Her eldest daughter Madge is not good at studies but has good looks. So she engages her with a rich boy Alan and asks her to utilize her beauty and youth to win Alan's love and wealth : "A pretty girl doesn't have long – just a few years. Then she's the equal of kings and she can walk out of a shame like this and live in a palace with a doting husband who spend his life making her happy" (81). Flo could not utilize her beauty in a proper way but she does not want to let Madge lose the chance of good life because "if she loses her chance then she might as well throw all her prettiness away" (81). Flo does not like Hal's presence around her house and calls him a 'tramp'. She finds

similarities between Hal and her husbands personalities. Probably her experience makes her doubtful about Hal's character when she says : "He's no good. He'll never be able to support you. When he does have a job, he'll spend all his money on booze. After a while there'll be other woman" (147).

Flo's life has been difficult and unhappy so she does not want to take risk regarding the lives of Madge and Millie. She prefers a good and comfortable life than love. Love does not strengthen a person: "...a woman is weak to being with, I suppose, and sometimes... her love makes her feel... almost helpless. And may be she fights him – 'cause her love makes her seem so dependent" (83-84).

Apparently Flo's concept of love is entirely materialistic. She inspires Madge to make love with Alan. When Madge tells her that she feels uncomfortable with Alan's friends Flo asks her to feel easy because "you'll get over those feelings in time. Alan will be going back to school in a few weeks. You better get busy" (81). But her daughter Madge is unable to understand her mother. She fails to fulfill her mother's dream. At the end of the play her concept is defeated. Love become more important than wealth because it cannot be inspired forcibly. Despite her efforts Madge leaves her home to search her lover Hal. Flo tries hard but she fails to

convince her daughter. She finds her own story reaped in Madge – Hal affair. She is beaten by Madge's decision of going to find out Hal in Tulsa. She doesn't want to let her daughter go to a strange place lonely. As a mother she is worried because "She's so young there are so many things I meant to tell her, and never got around it" (147-148).

She loses her daughter because of her ambitions and expectations. If she would not have forced her daughter to engage with Alan and tried to understand his likes and dislikes, she would not lose her daughter. If she accepts Hal as a match of her daughter easily and respects their decision Madge would get an easier life. Flo's over ambitious outlook is responsible to ruin her own daughters life. But her own experience of love checks Flo to be liberal towards her daughter. Her bitter experience regarding love has made her insensitive towards it. She tries to gain all that she has missed in her own life. But her dreams shatters and she is defeated once again before love which originates from heart not from mind.

Howard is a minor but an important character. He is Rosemary's boyfriend with whom she has been dating for a long time. He seems unwilling to marry Rosemary when she proposes him. He is forty two year old. He tells Rosemary that he is set in his

ways and a successful marriage wants a person to change his ways according to his companion's need. So it is so late that he cannot start changing. Rosemary traps him before her two friends when he comes back the next day probably to tell her that he will not marry her but Rosemary succeeds and Howard has no other option than accept her.

As a human being, he is nice person. When Rosemary unnecessarily blames Hal for Marie's critical condition because she has drunk wine he defends Hal. He says to Rosemary "you gotta remember men have got feelings to same as women" (125).

He is very sensitive to what people and the local society thinks and demands. When Rosemary insists on him to dance like Hal he says, "Golly, honey, I'm a businessman" (120). He also attempts to reject her proposal of marriage by saying, "What'd people say?" (129). After spending a night with Rosemary he seems worried if Mrs. Owens suspects any thing about their relationship. He also says that he and Rosemary should be careful in talk because "a businessman gotta be careful of talk. And after all, you're a school teacher" (128).

Howard's life is not very much different from Rosemary's life. He agrees with Rosemary's statement that loneliness of an unmarried person is unbearable. His life is "no bed of roses...

there's some bad things about every life" (130). Like Rosemary he is not in condition of selecting his match according to his likes. Rosemary is probably the best and last option for him in present circumstances. But he hesitates to accept her because his age of making love has already passed. It will be funny to get married for a middle aged person.

Besides Howard is a man who does not like to show himself weak before a woman. He says to Rosemary, "I'm not gonna marry any one that says, "you gotta marry me, Howard." I'm not gonna. If a woman wants me to marry her - she can at least say "please"" (131). It is apparent in the play that Howard and Rosemary has been friend for some period. So naturally Howard likes her at some level. It may be that he has never considered her as his wife. But when Rosemary traps him in front of her friends, he surrenders before her easily. He doesn't tries to go against her decision and to put his own decision because at last he realizes that "a man's gotta settle down sometime.... And folks'd rather do business with a married man!" (139).

Therefore Howard takes Rosemary with him not because he loves her but he wants to escape from loneliness and he has no other option rather than Rosemary. He also compromises to get a better life and he is ready to live with Rosemary whom he does not

love.

Millie, Madge's younger sister is also one of the important minor characters. Her ~~is~~ not a fully developed love story in the play she admits the fact that she is not pretty. She behaves like a boy and there is no tenderness like a girl in her behavior. She never tries to be like Madge. She is a smoker while her mother is ignorant of her habit. She envies her sister's beauty. She does not like the contemporary society which worships *only* the physical beauty. She says to Flo, "you're just saying I'm pretty because you're my mom. People we love are always pretty but people who're pretty to begin with everybody loves them(104)."

The character of Rosemary and Millie resemble closely Both dislike men because they are afraid of rejection. Millie "finds sublimation in her readings and in her day dreams of becoming a novelist who will shock readers." She is ambitious and she wants a good life in future. She learns a lot from Madge's tragic love affair. She says, "I'm old enough already, Madge can stay in this jerk water town and marry some ornery guy and raise a lot of dirty kids. When I graduate from college I'm going to New York and write novels that'll shock people right out of their senses" (146).

Madge is successful with boys while Millie is unable to face competition for boys. She does not know how to talk with boys, She

gets nervous before going with Hal as his date and says, "...I've got a date with him and its different" (103).

At present she is in adolscent age so she has also the dreams and feeling of an ordinary girl. She wantsto attract the boys like her sister. She feelsuncomfortable to dance properly with Hal because "I never danced with boys. I always have to lead" (118). But Hal and Madge dance very well and Marie gets hurt. She is beaten by her sister once again. She is shocked and drinks whisky. Millie seems frustrated and defeated when she says to Madge "I hate you!...Madge is pretty one.... Madge is the pretty one" (122).

In Act III scene two Alan comes back to meet Madge. Millie admits shyly before Alan "...I always liked you Alan did you know it..."(136).

Thus Millie likes Alan but never has expressed because "It's awfully hard to show someone you like them isn't it" (136), but now when Madge is engaged with Hal she dares to express her feelings before Alan. Although Alan respond positively Millie does not expect anything from Alan. She says, "I don't expect you to do anything about it. I just wanted to tell you" (136).

However Mille seems unconcerned with boys early in the play but later she fails to keep herself away from the boys. She is still busy in making her carrier in studies. Her situation is very much

like Alan. She is also defeated and beaten at the end of the play. Once again she decides to keep herself aloof from the boys. She decides "I'll be so great and famous I'll never fall in love" (146). She starts her school after the vacation. It can be predicted that Mille will probably get engaged with Alan after both of them complete their studies. But at present she says firmly "I'm never gonna fall in love. Not me" (145).

Thus in Picnic William Inge has again dealt with the theme of love in surface level. There is no depth in love of Hal, Alan, Howard, Madge or Rosemary. All the characters are engaged with their partners because of selfishness. Hal goes under the shelter of Madge because he is badly hurt by Rosemary. Besides she is the most beautiful girl of the town. He makes physical relationship with her without knowing that her as a human being. He has no plan of future even he has not thought of marrying her. He is unable to give her financial security. He leaves her after spending a night alone with her because the police of the town is chasing him in the case of a theft. Obviously his future seems so dark that Madge can not think of a good life with him. He never tries to think that one night of love with Madge can ruin her whole life.

Alan enjoys Madge's company to make his reputation. He treats her as a show piece who has no feeling and emotions. He

always talk about his own feelings. He seems concerned with his own plan of future. His relationship with Madge is like an agreement – “Alan’s money and position in exchange for Madge’s good looks.”⁶ His own speech makes clear that he is incapable of meeting competition for attracting girls. At the end of the play he is beaten by Hal once again. In the presence of Hal his relationship with Madge seems unstable from the beginning of the play.

In Howard’s case his decision of marry with Rosemary is not inspired by his love for her. He has been trapped by Rosemary after he passes moonlit night with her. Probably he has no idea that the night would be the turning point of his life. He also realizes that life without a companion will be unbearable. He also wants to be settled but his over age and the fear of the society check him to decide. When Rosemary insistson him to marry her, he promises her to talk about the matter the next day. The next day he comes back probably to reject her proposal but Rosemary does not give him any opportunity to put his decision. But he accepts her when she shatters her rigid personality and independent pose.

Obviously the relationship of Howard and Rosemary is not bound with love. It is merely a compromise to escape from the present situation. Their love is likely to begin after marriage but their relationship will not be different from the relationship of Doc

and Lola in Come Back Little Sheba – ‘cold and boring’.

Madge's relationship with Alan is not inspired by love. Earlier she is engaged with Alan because her mother wants so. Alan has wealth and status to provide her an easier life. But her adjustable attitude fails to check her from going in to Hal's hands. She likes Hal's personality and way of talking. She steps towards Hal first and gets ready to surrender herself while she knows she is already engaged with Alan. She finds all in Hal that Alan lacks. So she surrenders herself before him without caring her mother's dream. The relationship between Hal and Madge takes place when both of them are unhappy and they want someone to heal their wounds of heart. Real love cannot be done by mind but it is the question of heart “you don't love someone 'cause he is perfect” (147).

Besides, Madge and Hal have some similarities as both of them are attractive. They have been struggling through life to make a place in the society. They are trying to find security and lack self-confidence. Hal and Madge have been stumbling through life and they fail to achieve what their dreams are. Both are engaged in a conflict against society. So their attraction is inevitable in the play.

Rosemary also compromises with Howard because there is no other man around her surrounding who can marry her. She wants to get rid off her loneliness and dull life of a spinster so she

chooses Howard.

Therefore all the characters starve for surface love and so called compromise so that they can lead an easier life than their present life. No character attempt to go beyond sexual pleasures.

(b) Emphasis upon sex:-

The theme of the play is also based on sexual relationship. The relationship between Madge and Hal begins with physical attraction. Inge has given a detailed description of their first meeting when no body is at home. Both of them easily get ready to make physical relationship. They surrender without understanding each other properly.

Inge's description of Hal's personality and its sex appeal is very effective. Hal attracts all the women living around him. Hal moves their suppressed sexual desires. Mrs. Owen's husband went away when her children were very small. She does not like him because Hal has the same sex appeal as her husband had and she was trapped by him. She fears about her daughter's future.

Helen potts, the next door neighbor of Flo gives shelter to Hal at her home. She lives with her old mother but her husband is not with her because he was killed in a war. She keeps Hal near him because his personality has something which soothes her

eyes. Hal represents all that she has missed in life. She herself has no hope of attracting him even though she would like to. But she enjoys watching Hal's developing relationship with Madge.

Rosemary is a sexually frustrated character. She is a school teacher in a small town. Everybody in a small town knows each other. She has to follow the code of conduct of a school teacher. More over she has passed her young age. She has no hope to satisfy her sexual desire. She cannot do any thing which is harmful for her image. The contemporary American society was not so bold in the matter of sex as at present. Her emotions burst out when she watches Hal and his sensuous dance with Madge. Her suppressed sexual desires arise and become uncontrolled. She wants to take some pleasure by dancing Hal but fails to do so. Ultimately she realizes that it is impossible to achieve Hal in her age so she turns to Howard who is easily available for her.

Hal attracts Madge because Madge is unsuccessful to fulfill her sexual desires with Alan. She finds no intensity in his emotions. In contrast Inge gives "Hal trapping of a surface virility : A dirty t-shirt, blue jeans, cowboy boots and a great hairy chest that holds immense fascination for the woman in the play."⁷ Madge herself a very beautiful girl for whom it was easy to draw Hal towards her. She realizes that Hal is the male who can provide her that kind of

sexual pleasure which she misses with Alan. Inge's male characters seems free from the problem of sexual frustration that his females suffer. In the contemporary society men had more in sexual behavior than a women. Women had to lead a more balanced life. The group of women in Picnic expose themselves self dependent but the entry of Hal shatters their independent pose. William Inge himself writes, "I was fascinated to find how... the women seemed to have created the world of their own, a world in which they seemed to be pretending men did not exist."⁸ But Inge presents Hal Carter, "a vagabond with a muscular physique and little else; he is the rooster that manages to arouse this whole baryard colony of hens."⁹ He disturbs the group of women. Picnic is considered "an intimate and powerful handling of the emotional needs of a group of women in a small monotonous Kansas town."¹⁰

At the end I would like to conclude the analysis with the reference to various descriptions of love and sex in Inge's Picnic. Inge has thrown light on the theme of love and sex from various angles.

In European society as it has been made clear earlier sex and love are not hidden matters. The young boys and girls do not hesitate to propose to each other for sexual relationship before marriage. They do not wait for enjoying sexual pleasures until they

marry. Love and sex are easy going matters for them. Dating prepares a boy or a girl to understand each other. It is the first step to enter the institution of marriage. If a boy or girl is not satisfied with his or her partner he or she can change the partner. But in Inge's plays most of the couples make sexual relationship in their very first dating. Later the couples are forced to marry because of the girls' undesired pregnancy before marriage. Lola and Flo suffer from the crisis. The proposal of dating can be given to anybody whom they like. Madge, the heroine of the play says to bomber, that "If a boy wants to date with me he can come to the door like a gentleman and ask if I'm in."¹ Obviously she would consider the proposal if she likes the boy. Though the attraction between boys and girls is because of different reasons, the physical beauty and economic status are the two main factors to decide their relationship in *Picnic*. Mrs. Flo Owens selects Alan for Madge's dating because she is very beautiful. Hal is a handsome boy and is friend of Alan so he is selected as Millie's date. Howard and Rosemary go in dating not for marital purpose but merely passing time as they are alone and it provides a way to fulfill their sexual needs.

Besides Inge seems in favour of legal love and sex by providing the option of marriage, the last and permanent solution of

the problem of sexual frustration and loneliness. Marriage gives stability to the relationship while dating provides relationship for the short term. Marriage provides a family to men and women with a purpose. It helps to remove loneliness if the husband and wife try to understand the needs of their partners.

The play is a good effort to portray the struggle of day to day life of a lower middle class family in the contemporary American society. The characters have dreams, hopes and expectations for future. But sex plays an important role to give the direction of their lives in future. The sexual frustration motivates Rosemary to marry Howard immediately while the first sex experience of Hal with Madge ruins their lives.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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4. I bid.
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C H A P T E R 4

Bus Stop

Bus stop presents to quote William Inge's own words " a composite picture of varying kinds of love ranging from the innocent to the depraved."¹ The action of the play takes place in a street corner restaurant in a small Kansas city. The play opens in a stormy night. It opens with the conversation of two females Grace and Elma who are the workers of the restaurant . Grace is a middle aged woman while Elma is a young school girl. It is 1:00 AM of a stormy night. Will Masters, the sheriff enters the restaurant and tells about the arrival of a bus. The bus can not move towards its next station because the road is blocked by wind and snow . Grace informs Will that phones are cut Meanwhile Cherie, an attractive young girl, runs in upset because she has been kidnapped by a young cowboy Bo Decker who wants to marry her. Bo and his buddy Virgil are still asleep in the bus and she wants to get away

before they awake. After some moments Bo enters with Virgil and treats Cherie in very rude manner. At the same time Dr Lyman is also present there who is drunken. He is an important figure of the play who leads an isolated life without any companion. All the people tries to entertain by music, dance and acting to pass the night.

On the other hand the argument between Bo and Cherie also continues. He expresses his love for Cherie roughly, embraces her hardly and kisses her. She reacts to his proposal and opposes his behaviour.

Bo shouts. The sheriff warns him for his attitude Virgil apologizes and advises Bo not to treat a woman in such a way. Finally Bo realizes the fact that Cherie does not love him. Virgil also tries to assure Cherie that Bo does not want to create any harm to her. At the end of the play she decides to go with Bo for the journey of a new life but Bo's friend Virgil is left alone. Dr Lyman also emerges as a reformed character. Grace tries

to find her satisfaction in Carl the bus driver. Elma is also left alone but she is a young girl and she will get lots of opportunity for love.

(a) Concept of love :-

Bus stop is basically an anatomy of love. Inge has attempted to present different shades of love in it. The first main love conflict is between Cherie and Bo. Bo is the prototypical provincial twenty one year old young man. He is tall slim and good looking cowboy. He is an immatured man who does not know the philosophy of real love. He is crude and rough by his nature.

Bo first met Cherie in the Blue Dragon night club where "she completely captivated him by her rendition of "That Old Black Magic."² He fell in love with Cherie and spent the night with her. Bo himself admits: "...Yor about the cutest li'l piece I ever did see... when I...hear you singin' my favorite song, standin' before the orkester looking like a angel I told myself

then and there she's fer me. I ain't gonna leave this place with out her..."(172).³ After then Bo always insisted on her to marry him but Cherie did not like to marry him.-----Early in the play Bo's love for Cherie seems one sided love He thinks that a boy's love for a girl is sufficient for a long happy marital life .He has no respect for a woman's likes and dislikes. He fully expect Cherie to marry him when he admits that he loves her. He can not believe that he may be disliked by a girl : "...a gal oughta like me. I kin read and write, I 'm kinda, tidy and I got good manners....I'm tal and strong.... I'm purty good lookin'" (186).

Financially Bo also considers himself a suitable fellow match for Cherie because he owns a ranch up in Timber Hill in Montana. He has six thousand dollars in the bank and he has "color television set with the twenty-four- inch screen" (193). Bo's over confidence on himself checks him to accept the reality that he may love someone who does not reciprocate his love: " I... I just never realized ...a gal might ...love me"

(178). The character of Bo has no artificiality. He grew old in a ranch in a free atmosphere. He is innocent and a provincial boy. There is no deception in his behavior when his friend Virgil suggests him to be more showy before Cherie, he refuses: "I ain't gonna pretend" (186). He is impatient and does not know how to put a marital proposal before a girl. Being a stubborn young man he tries to get a thing that he likes at any cost.

Bo is bold in admitting his love. To him it's no crime to show his love for his beloved even in public place. He grabs her in his arms in the restaurant and says. "...It's no crime to show a li'l affection, is it? specially when we're gonna git married" (172). In the last Act Will, the sheriff warns him not to take Cherie with him without her desire otherwise he can be sent to the penitentiary under the Mann act. But Bo does not fear. Even he looks more determined when he says "I loved her" (204). He has courage to face life's problems, When Virgil suggests him to have wine to relieve himself from tension and pain he rejects his advice and says confidently: "I never did drink and I ain't gonna let no woman drive me to it" (182).

Bo has no family. He is alone in the world. Virgil has been looking after him when he was only ten years old. He has spent all his time in his ranch. He does not know what love is. He

considers woman as a curious thing: "...I'd lived all my life on a ranch... and I guess I din know much about women... 'cause they're different from men" (120). He had never known any woman so closely. Bo's experience with Cherie in the bedroom was a new experience and he considers it as his love affair with her. She was "the first gal I ever had anything to do with. ...you was so purty and ya seemed ...to kinda warm hearted and sweet I felt like I could love you..."(210). Cherie is the first and the last girl of his life. Actually Bo misunderstood her when he saw her in the night club. He watched her "singin' and you smiled at me while you was singin and winked at me ... no gal ever done that to me before so I thought you was singin' just fer me" (210). Like Inge's other characters in different plays Bo also suffers from the sense of insecurity and loneliness. His sense of loneliness pushes him to seek a companion who can share his happiness as well as sorrows: "...there's been times the last few months I been lonesome , I... I jest didn't know what t'do with m'self(183). The sense of loneliness sometimes weakens him. For him he can overcome his problem of loneliness through marriage. He has no other way through which he can come out from his troubles. His first experience with Cherie gives a hope for his better future. Being an average ordinary man Bo never wants to be defeated a woman: "...I never had to beg no woman to make love to me... I never had to

coax no woman to make love to me(172). In the beginning Bo offers Cherie a love that is dominating all demanding and which has no knowledge of humility. What Adler speaks about a preconceived idea of male dominance in a marriage is very much evident in Bo's attitude. He calls himself Cherie's husband several time while they are still unmarried. He also dislikes Cherie's idea of protection from him:

"Bo... what 'd ya need protection for... from a man that wants to marry ya? Cherie (shuddering)... 'cause... Bo(Bellowing angrily) – 'cause why? I said I loved Ya din" (175).

He always tries to be victorious and superior before Cherie. After he loses the fight with Will, Bo doubts that Cherie would "have no respecte for me now, she saw me beat(206)." His ego does not allow him to seem weak in front of others.

He also refuses Will's advice of being a humble man for getting his love by saying, "I ain't gonna get down on my knees and beg" (205).

Earlier Bo refuses to go to Cherie for apologizing

because of his ego problem. But when Virgil and Will master insists on him to do so, he apologizes because his desire for Cherie inspires him to evaluate himself. He does not want any substitute of her. He rejects Virgil's advice of finding lot of girls in place of Cherie who will love him passionately by saying: "I want Cherie" (208).

However, Bo's strong will of marrying Cherie shakes a little. When Cherie tells about her past he reevaluates his decision and says to Cherie that Virgil thinks, "I'm virgin enough for the two of us" and he adds "I like ya like ya are Cherry. So I don't care how ya get that way" (214).

In the beginning of the play Bo's love for Cherie is entirely based upon physical attraction or may be called a surface love. But at the end of the play his love is based upon realistic outlook. Bo apologizes and then, as Robert Brustein puts it "indicates his tamed domesticity by solicitously putting his leather jacket around her. Shoulders."⁴ showing his tenderness, Bo proves his point "A man's gotta right to the things he loves" (205). Through humility he succeeds in to achieve his love.

Cherie is, probably, a most important focus of the play. She is a saloon dancer in Kansas city. Her relationship with Bo begins from the Blue Dragon Club. She spends a night with Bo. After then Bo started insisting on her to marry him. But Cherie did not like to marry a cowboy like him.

Cherie's philosophy o love is entirely based upon materialistic outlook. She was the native of a little town in the Ozarks near River Gulch. She had a large family with parents, two brothers and five sisters . At the age of twelve she had to leave her school to stay at home and take care of her house when her older sister Violet had ran away from house. But now she has lost her family because three years ago a flood separated her and her young sister Nan from their family. She came to Joplin with Nan where Nan got a job as waitress while Cherie started working in a drugstore. Later she participated in an amateur contest in Joplin and won the second prize and got the job at the Blue Dragon. Recently she has already left her job. It is obvious she has been struggling for surviving and has seen the society very closely. That is why she is very practical in the question of love. She considers her first sex experience with Bo as a casual affair unlike Bo. She has a long experience of boys till the age of nineteen: "I dunno. I'm only nineteen, but

I been goin' with guys since I was fourteen" (187). So to Cherie there is nothing serious in her affair with Bo. She thinks that spending one night together doesn't "mean ya gotta marry me" (175). Earlier she does not believe in Bo's proposal. She thinks that he is joking. She realizes the seriousness of the proposal when he keeps on insisting on her stubbornly again and again. Cherie is confused in the situation because she is not psychologically prepared for marriage. She "honestly thought he was crazy" (). Cherie wants to resist his proposal but Bo does not give any opportunity to say something Cherie feels uncomfortable because after spending first night with her Bo "...stayed by my side all day long like a shadow... If any other fella claimed t'have a date with me, Bo'd beat him up" (184).

Cherie, does not like Bo's aggressive and possessive behaviour. She is not so much sentimental as Bo. The club is the place where lots of boys come daily and she has to face them. She can not take seriously all the boys. For Cherie Bo is also one of them. Her profession is not a respectable profession. So she can not expect a man to love her and marry her. Moreover Bo's rude and rough behavior creates unknown fear in her. In the first Act of the play Cherie enters the restaurant to hide because Bo is chasing her. She came out stealthily from the bus while Bo and his friend Virgil are asleep. She is so

much scared of him that she asks the sheriff Will to provide protection: I... I need protection. There's a man after me. He's a cowboy" (158). she also makes clear that she is being abducted by him to get married. She can not trust a man who "grabs ahold of a woman and kisses her...like he was Napoleon" (201). Cherie dislikes his style of showing love for her. When he embraces her forcibly in the restaurant she tries to get rid off his embrace and says, " Bo...there's people here... they're lookin'..."(172). She does not like his rough and uncivilized approach to love. When Bo approaches her with humility and tenderness, she seems willing and eager to go to Montana and marry him.

Though Cherie rejects his marital proposal again and again yet there is something in Bo's personality which attracts her. In their first meeting at the night club Cherie also liked him. Cherie tells that during her song "he jumped up on a chair and yelled like an Indian and put his fingers in his mouth and whistled like a steam engine. Natur'ly it made me feel good" (183) because other customers were too drunk to pay any attention to her songs. She repeats the same song The Old Black Magic in the mock night club performance instigated by Elma, to cast her spell over Bo again later she admits the fact

that "I was attracted right from the start" (184). Cherie always saw the cowboys in movies. She has never seen a cowboy like Bo who is "dam?" and healthy in real life. To her "he was awful cute" (183). But further she adds that it was only a sexual attraction not love in real sense. She can not believe that a man can love her so passionately because he has spent a single night with her. She considers him a man who wants "a girl to thro his arms around and hug and kiss, that's all. The resta the time, he don't even know I exist" (183). Cherie wants respect and regard from her lover. She wants a man who can care for her likes and dislikes. But Bo's image is quite opposite from Cherie's imagination of her dream boy. His furious and indisciplined behaviour doubts her whether he would treat her in right way after getting married. She wants "a guy I can look up to and respect, but don't want one that 'll browbeat me, And I want a guy who can be sweet to me but I don't wanta be treated like a ball. I just gotta feel that whoever I marry has some real regard for me, apart from all the lovin' and sex" (187). Cherie like Madge in *Picnic* is in search of true love. She is much in need of someone who will love her for she has never in her past life know what is to be wanted. Cherie discloses an important fact in a conversation with Elima that at the age of fourteen she

attempted to marry her cousin Malcom. Obviously it was immatured decision by her so her father disapproved her choice and predicted that he would not be a suitable husband for her. The prediction turned into truth so now she is glad that she never married her cousin. Since Malcolm Bo is the first boy who wants to marry her.

The second time Cherie seems more alert in taking the decision of marriage. Being an ordinary girl she has also the dream to get married and raise a family. She is still waiting for a perfect man. A sudden encounter with Bo does not give her sufficient time to take the important decision of marriage. Before marriage she wants to fall in love with her match: "I dunno why I keep expectin m'self to fall in love with someone, but I do" (187). She is not sure whether she is in love with Bo or not. She expresses her own thoughts regarding love when she says, "...Mebbe I don't know what love is Mebbe I'm expectin't'be something it ain't. I just feel that regardless how crazy ya are 'bout some guy, ya gotta feel..."(187). But the most important factor of Cherie's life is financial. She is an adrift. She is jobless and seems to have a lack luster future before her. Financially her condition is not good. When Elma tells her that there is a little hotel down the street where she might hide herself from Bo

she answers. What ya take me for? A millionaire? (158). She checks her money before she orders for doughnuts. Cherie has not a bright future because she has to search another job for her while Bo is financially established man. She knows her destiny: "... after a while I'll prob'ly marry some guy, whether I think I love him or not. Whom I to keep ensistin' I should fall in love. You hear all about love when yor a kid and jest take it for granted that such a thing really exists. May be have to find out for yourself it don't" (188). The dialogue shows Cherie's realistic outlook. In the whole play Cherie does not deny her intimacy with Bo but she is merely shocked and surprised that he has taken seriously such a casual affair. In the end of the play when Bo tries to be tender, Cherie's attitude towards him begins to change. Besides, she seems grateful to Bo when Virgil tells her that she is the first girl of his life; "...I sure ain't never had that honor before"(202).

At the end of the p lay she forgives him and ready to "go anywhere in the world with ya now, Bo. Any where at all" (215).

In addition Inge has attempted to throw light on the fact that honesty in love is an unavoidable element Cherie seems the lost honest person when she reveals her past before Bo:

"...I figgered since ya found me at the Blue Dragon ya just look it fer granted I'd had other boy friends 'fore you" (209).

Apparently she does not consider herself a suitable girl for him because she has led a life of a prostitute. She feels guilty when she says, "... Bo it's kinda personal and kind embarrassin', too, but... I ain't the kinda gal you thought I was" (209).

The information is really shocking for Bo because he has to reconsider his desire to marry her. But despite of Cherie's bad past Bo decided to marry her. It is apparent that it is a great honor for Cherie in itself. Bo is, to quote Shuman's words, "an excellent catch for someone in her position."⁵

Virgil Blessing is another important character of the play. Inge has presented a different form of love through him. His name Virgil Blessing suggests purity. He has been looking after twenty one year old Bo for last eleven years. He provides parental love to Bo. His love is "based on charity rather than an eroticism."⁶ The Greeks identify this form of love as 'agathe'. Virgil is a true friend of Bo who always suggests him rightly. Virgil is also an isolated person who has no one except Bo in the world. Once he was also in love with a girl. He recalls his past

days and his love. His love story became unsuccessful or it could not be converted into marriage. The main reason of the failure was, as he tells to Bo, a gap between he and his beloved; "... I was allus kinda uncomfortable around this gal 'cause she was sweet and kinda refined. I was allus scared I'd say or do something wrong" (185). Apparently Virgil did not consider himself a suitable match of her because of this fear. So he did not propose her. On the other hand he was a homeless fellow and used to spend most of the time with his friends. He was leading a free life without any bounding. He dared not to propose her and "... every time I'd get back from courtin' her and come back to the bunkhouse where my buddies was sitting around talkin' or playin' cards or listenin' to music I'd jest relax and feel m'self so much at home, I din wanta give it up(185).

Now he considers the decision as a great mistake. He feels ashamed. He has realized that a fellow can't live his whole life depending on buddies. Now he is repenting and facing a life of loneliness. He has turned back on conventional love by saying; " A long time ago I gave up romancin' and decided I was just gonna take being lonesome for granted" (183).

Virgil's role in Bo's life is like a guardian .He is the soul of genuine unostentatious sacrifice .He attempts honestly to make settlement between Bo and Cherie .He does not want to let Bo suffer the same disaster as he has been suffering. His devotion to Bo is sincere and ingenious as he has already left the chance to have a home and family Virgil is too late to marry his beloved. He has turned his attention towards Bo to settle down him properly. In the climax of the play when Bo and Cherie are ready to get married, and set up their home Virgil steps out of Bo's life. He reacts as his work is now over. Virgil is a man of experience and matured sensitivity .He shares his experience regarding love with Bo and suggests him how to treat a girl when he is in love with her. He discusses his weaknesses and asks him to be more gallant with girl. He also introduces a fact that the girls attract towards tender things or behaviour, "Yah Bo! Girls like things t'be tender" (191). Virgil tries hard to expose the tender side of Bo's nature "I'm just tryin, to show ya that you got a tender side to your nature same as anyone else" (192). To Virgil a girl has also feelings, emotions, likes and dislikes so an man "can't force a gal to marry ya" (182).

His name Virgil Blessing is in itself suggestive of the

purity His love for Bo is genuine and beyond selfishness. At the end of the play when Bo and Cherie leave him he blesses their marriage. He also promises to visit them in Montana. Though he finds difficult to control over his emotions, he tries hard to control his feelings "No... No... iemme be, Bo" (216). When Bo insists on him not to leave him, Virgil says laughing "In a couple weeks ya'll never miss me" (217).

The end of Bus stop is not hopeful for Virgil .He is entirely in the grip of isolation. He is left just alone in the restaurant and has nowhere to go. When Grace says that she is sorry because he is left out in the cold Virgil replies; "Well ... that's what happens to some people(219)."

The tragedy seems inevitable in Virgil's life Probably he has already prepared himself for this end earlier. So he does not waste a single moment after their decision of marrying each other. She immediate decision of leaving Bo does not give him the opportunity to select the place where he would get settled down. In the climax of the play, though Virgil is alone. yet he is ready to face the stark realities of life without a companion .He is quite bold to accept the reality. The portrait

of Virgil supports the theme that life without love is lonely. William Inge leaves a solution of Virgil's problem i.e. he can go to Grace's apartment and can share the warmth of her love as Carl the bus driver does.

The character of Dr. Lyman is also a man without love. He is Doctor philosophy. He has medium height. He is a man of "about fifty with a ruddy boyish face that smilingly defies the acts of his rather scholarly glasses and iron grey hair" (159). Dr Lyman's tragedy is that "I never had the generosity to love to give my own most private self to another for I was weak. I thought the gift would somehow lessen me. Me ! (200)

Like Virgil Blessing Dr Lyman also represents polarity. He is professor in a college. He married three women but all of them have already left him. He failed to provide all that they desire. But he tries to show his honesty by saying, "Don't shame me. I loved them all... passion(188). He has been living an isolated life for a long period because his "third and last wife deserted me several years ago... for a ballplayer" (164). She was very beautiful and wanted "to find new marital bliss with her ballplayer" (164). So she left her. Dr. Lyman regarded her a kind lady because he never had to pay her alimony

His second wife was also a pretty lady. He fell in love with her when he was teaching at an eastern university and she was his student there. She was discontented of Lyman's life style. So she sued me for divorce on the grounds that I was incontinent and always drunk" (165).

Lyman recalls his honeymoon with his first wife in Bermuda. He calls her "the loveliest of them all" (173). She sued him for divorce on the grounds of mental cruelty. After Dr Lyman she has not married any another man. So he is still paying alimony to her.

Thus Dr Lyman is entirely lonely soul, Dr tries to rationalize his isolation by equating it with freedom; "I have no missus sir. I am free. I can travel the universe with no one to await my arrival anywhere" (164). Unlike Doc and Lola in Come Back Little Sheba Dr Lyman and his wives do not change their way of life Doc and Lola accept each other despite their weaknesses. Even they try to change their habit because their separation would only give them loneliness. In contrast Dr. Lyman and his wives are not successful to make their marriage stable. Apparently in above cases there is lack of love between the couples. Lyman's three attempts have failed. He is now

hopeless; "... Getting married is a careless habit. I've fallen into. Sometimes really, I must give it all up..."(164).

He is entirely in the grip of loneliness. Alcohol has been his comfort and he spends most of his time on buses, siding between towns; "...I travel around from one town to another just to prove myself that I'm free" (161).

Obviously Dr Lyman has hunger for love. So he attempts to make love with the young employee of the restaurant Elma. He is attracted towards her because she is young and beautiful. Over all she takes interest in him. He attempts to arrange a meeting with Elma in Topeka; "You can take me to the library than perhaps we could have dinner together and perhaps you would permit me to take you to the symphony" (181).

But Dr Lyman does not seem honest when he urges Elma not to tell anyone about the trip. He is afraid of society that would not regard it rightly. He is also aware of his weaknesses as he has been married for three times and he is older than her. During the attempt he seems very alert regarding his affair when he says; "... I have been married and I

am somewhat older than you though perhaps not quite as old as you might take me to be ...anyway people might not understand" (181). His approach to Elma creates doubts about his character. Later in the play Carl, the bus driver, discloses the fact before Grace that the Doctor had been in trouble several times, for getting involved with young girls. His over praising Elma and very informal behavior suspect others that he is attempting to flirt with her.

Unlike Virgil Dr. Lyman is a self centered person. He is unable to change . He has adopted wine and traveling as the substitute of marriage to get away from isolation while Virgil decides to face his problem boldly He tried to find a solution in young and fresh Elma He himself selects the character of Romeo to act with her in the Balcony Scene from Romeo and Juliet. His performance emerges him as a selfish performer when he reads all his speeches as grand soliloquies regarding his Juliet as prop.

His self centeredness and selfishness made him unsuccessful in love. He finds himself weak to be loved when he says. "It takes strong men and women to love... People strong

enough inside themselves to love... without humiliation" (200).

He also agrees with the fact that love brings a change in human life. It increases responsibility and a responsible person can only be successful in love. He has to be generous for his beloved; "People big enough to grow with their love and live inside a whole wide new dimension. People brave enough to bear the responsibility of being loved and no fear as burden" (200).

Dr Lyman fails to be generous .He has realized his weakness in the play but it is too late to admit his fault Now he is an old man. When Elma says she likes him he replies. I am flattered my dear and pleased but you're young. In a few years, you will turn... from a girl into a woman a kind thoughtful loving intelligent woman who could only pity me. For I'm a child adrunken. Unruly child and I've nothing in my heart for a true woman" (200).

His philosophy of love is very clear in his statements To him love needs sacrifice so "two people , really in love must give something of themselves" (189).

In the beginning of the play Lyman appears as a drunk and a desperate character who is unable to change himself but at the end of the play he becomes a reformed character. He accepts the reality that he is too old to make love with a young girl like Elma. He drops the idea of going to Topeka and says:

"...Dear girl let us give up our little spree, shall we? You don't want to go traipsing over the streets of the states capital with an old reprobale like me" (212).

The lack of love in his life causes mental disturbance. He himself discloses the fact that his friends have always been hinting him to go Topeka and should get psychoanalyzed. But he does not intend to go anywhere when he says.

"...I don't think I care to be psychoanalyzed. I rather cherish myself as I am" (213).

Lyman considers himself an unintelligent fellow in love. When Elma appreciates him as the smartest man she has ever met, he states; " ...I'm terribly smart. Wouldn't it have been nice... to be intelligent" (213).

Apparently Lyman has realized his shortcomings but simultaneously he seems unwilling to change his life style. In the climax of the play he has emerged as a reformed character who will probably face the stark realities of life without love.

Elma a big eyed girl is still in school. According to Shuman Elma "is a sincere innocent sort of creature who enjoys talking and is easy to talk with."⁷ The character of Elma represents purity. She is not mature enough to understand the philosophy of love deeply. She is "the young waitress more observer than participant in the adult world she is about to join."⁸ Elma is as bright in Bus Stop as Millie is in Picnic. She is just coming in touch with the term love. When Grace tells her the problems of her marital life, Elma tries to understand and gives an example of her own parents who are really in love with each other; "I guess my folks get along pretty well I mean they really seem to like each other" (155).

In further discussion we come to know that she is unpopular among the boys but she is good in studies. Elma looks curious to get popularity among boys when she puts a question to Grace; "What should I do? Flunk my courses" (155). Elma accepts Dr Lyman's offer to go Topeka without knowing

his real intention behind it. She simply considers it as enjoyment. For her he is an old man who is very friendly with her because generally older people do not involve the younger one in their matters: " ...Usually older people are too busy to take notice of kids .I'd just love to" (181).

In the climax of the play Grace advises her not to meet Dr Lyman in Topeka, Elma's ignorance regarding Lyman's intention is apparent when she says:" Do you think he wanted to make love to me? (218). She considers himself stupid because she could not understand the real sense of his talking. Simultaneously she seems excited with the thought that Dr Lyman wanted to make love with her. She looks at her image in the mirror pleasingly and says, Just think he wanted to make love to me" (218). On Grace's advice she is ready to wait till she gets to college for making love with cute boys. Thus Elma is not entirely ignorant from the term love. She has learnt a little and she has to learn a lot. In several places she tries to show herself a mature lady. When Grace tells that she does not like Will to talk with Elma regarding the relationship between herself and Carl, Elma tries to prove Grace wrong and says; "I don't see I shouldn't know Grace I don't wanta be a baby forever" (218). Grace, a middle aged lady, is a worker of the restaurant.

She is a hungry soul for love because her husband has gone away. She has to face loneliness because of her husband's absence. Her loneliness is expressed by her an early speech:

"...sometimes at night after I empty the garbage and lock the doors and turn out the lights. I get kind of sick feeling 'cause I sure don't look forward to walkin' up those stairs and lettin' myself into an empty apartment" (155).

Her tragedy is similar to Dr Lyman's whose marriage has proved a failure. But she has not done the mistake of marrying again as Dr Lyman says "...Getting married is a careless habit" (155). She has taken help of an extra marital affair with the bus driver Carl. Having an unsuccessful marital status she faces the problem of loneliness in both condition i.e. in the presence as well as in the absence of her husband. He could not be a good companion with whom she could share her feelings, "...Cause I got just as lonesome when he was here. He wasn't much company, 'cept when we were makin' love. ...The resta time me and Barton were usually fightin'(155). Grace's life is without direction. She has a dark future. She has noone who can respect and share her feeling sand sentiments. She knows her

end when she says; "...I'll probably die in the little town and they'll bury me out by the backhouse" (155). She has not any permanent relations with others. Daily lots of people visit her restaurant so she has replaced the tenderness and warmth in her heart with the defensive mechanisms to protect herself from being hurt. Carl is the bus driver who visits her restaurant for three times in a week. Grace and Carl get only twenty minutes to fulfil their desire. They don't have much time to be familiar with each other. At the night when the action of the play takes place Carl is happy because he can stay with Grace more than twenty minutes because of the storm. He requests her to give "a chance to become kinda acquainted" (203). But Grace is not curious regarding his request. Sometimes Carl wants to go beyond their casual affair but Grace does not seem interested to be settled with him. Carl wishes for an apartment where he can sit with her, talk to her and listen to radio. He questions; "Do you have an apartment like that Grace?" Grace answers; "Yes, I do, But I never told you about it" (163). Here it is apparent Grace is satisfied with her sexual relationship with Carl. She uses him as a means to satisfy herself. She doesn't consider him the right person with whom she can share her matters; "...Ya needn't go blabbing anything to the other drivers I know how you men talk when ya get together. Worse'n women" (203). Even she does not believe him that he is an

unmarried persc:.

On the other hand Grace wants only Carl to satisfy his need. She does not want to share her identity with other persons: "I certainly don't want the other drivers on this route some of 'em especially gettin' the idea I'm gonna serve 'em any more 'n what they order over the counter" (204).

At the very end of the play she can invite Virgil to her apartment for love but she does not do so because Carl has already satisfied her need. She also accepts that she likes Carl's hand and when Carl asks; "Ya ...ya kinda liked me ...dinya Grace.

she answers; May be I did" (204). Her answer does not show surity but possibility in some level. Besides Grace is very conscious regarding her reputation. She doesn't want Elma to know about her affair; "...you're a kid, and I don't wanta set no examples or anything, do you think you can overlook it and not think bad of me" (218).

Hence she knows that his affair with Carl can not be accepted rightly in moral sense But her sexual frustration and loneliness push her to find a man like Carl who is able to satisfy her needs: " 'cause I'm a restless sort of woman and every once in a while I gotta have me a man just to keep m'self from gettin' grouchy" (218).

Grace is also an experienced lady who guides Elma regarding love affair with boys when she says that she may have more boyfriends if she "didn't make such good grades. Boys feel kind of embarrassed if they feel girl is smarter than they are" (218). Here Grace is to Elma as Virgil is to Bo. She provides her some kind of maternal affection and guidance when she asks Elma not to meet Dr Lyman again. She also tell her to share her problem with her Aunt Grace.

Grace's outlook regarding love moves around sexual contentment . She wants sexual pleasure so that she can escape the feeling of loneliness and sexual frustration . She is not eager to be involved in spiritual love .Her life is a

deserted life.

Thus in *Bus stop* the hope for a happy marital. Life is more convincing than that offered by Come Back little Sheba and Picnic. Bo and Cherie are suitable for each other because. Bo is financially independent man who represents a lovable and touching spirit. Cherie is also a beautiful girl and attracted by Bo. Though she had a very miserable childhood which ended up in her becoming a night club dancer and prostitute. She finds happiness with Bo who is ready to respect and cherish her. Bo is capable to provide all that Cherie needs. At the end of the play their lives seems more hopeful. than any other couple's life presented by Inge. The theme of the play is a search for love. Inge's characters suffer from the sense of loneliness and in security. At the end of the play they cure their sickness of isolation by love. Robert Burstein has pointed out that "the man finds his salvation from fear need an security only through fulfillment of domestic love."⁹

Obviously Inge has used Bo Cherie conflict so that he

can write broadly about the question of love. The conflict "paid seduced dividends as it went along."¹⁰ *Bus stop* is an attempt to explore the question of love widely and philosophically. Other characters also contribute to the exploration. The character of Dr Lyman talks about love in modern references. He says that love is destroyed by the inability to give enough of ourselves. He feels that we have passed that stage of evolution wherein love is possible. Modern man is plagued by anxiety for mere survival. This anxiety shakes the very foundation of many marriages in our society. Walters J. Meserve aptly describes that the "play presented an assorted group of people whose attitude towards love suggest the scope that this emotion holds for mankind."¹¹

In Bus Stop Inge has done "much more than a trio of not very starting sketches they all deal with the conflict between security produced by selfishness and true love."¹² His characters are ready to compromise for their love. Inge's concept of love and sexuality is clearly related with each other. Love can be felt through sex. Grace gives priority to sexual pleasure while Cherie expects some more beyond sexuality from her lover. Virgil's love is genuine. His love deserves purity. Elma, being a young girl, is incapable to understand love and sexuality deeply. Carl and Will Master are minor

characters. Carl is being used by Grace. He is also happy with his casual affair with Grace. Will has no affair but he introduces an important fact that a humble man deserves the right to achieve his love; "A man don't deserve the things he loves, unless he kind be a little humble about gettin' 'em" (205).

(b) Emphasis upon Sex :-

Life without love is lonely is main theme of Inge's plays.

His characters always escape the reality and loneliness in search of love. Inge always insists on sexual love Bus stop has many sex starved figures. In the play Inge begins with "a homo-sexual atmosphere which develops the basic theme by means of allusions that counterpoint the dialogue."¹²

The relationships of Grace and Carl, Bo and Cherie, Elma and Dr Lyman, Virgil and his lost love provide variety in the play. Grace, a victim of a broken marriage settles only for temporary relationship. She has learned the art of separating her emotional life from her physical one. The relationship of Bo

and Cherie also begins with sexual relationship Initially, both of the relationships are not much different from each other .But one crucial element separates them i.e. Bo's love and passion is only for Cherie and it touches her who is already in need of someone to love her. Moreover Cherie has no financial security while Bo's financial condition can provide her all that she requires. They can also satisfy each other by their sexuality. Thus their balanced relationship has the stability. In contrast Grace Carl relationship is entirely based on sexual relationship They do not seem to convey their relationship for a long period. Their love begins in an apartment and also ends in it. If they want a stable relation they can marry but they have no intent to do so. They do not seem to care other aspects of each other's personality as well as life. Grace finds impossible to escape loneliness. The casual affair between her and Carl helps her to escape the reality . She finds relief from her sexual frustration. At the end of the play she tells Elma that she is a restless woman who needs a man to keep her from getting 'grouchy'. Here it is also noticeable that Grace does not look to share her identity with ...other person. because in the climax of the play when Virgil is left alone in the restaurant she may

invite him to her apartment but she doesn't do so as Carl has already satisfied her needs for that evening.

Therefore, Inge was aware of "the illusiveness of human experience."¹⁴ And his characters escape loneliness through sex. The relationship between Elma and Dr Lyman is not really based on sexual aspects. Their relationship begins and ends in the restaurant itself. Elma is not a matured girl in the term of sex but Dr Lyman is entirely a sexual frustrated man. His nympholepsy reinforces the depth of his self centeredness. His three marriages have failed. He could not provide the love and sexual pleasure to his wives as they desired. Now he is alone. His hunger for sex inspires to flirt Elma. He tries to clasp her hand during conversation; he fixes a meeting in Topeka with her and asks her not to tell anybody about the trip. His frustration can also be seen in his performance as Romeo in the Balcony Scene from Romeo and Juliet. In the last act of the play Carl tells Grace that the Dr has been caught several times for getting involved with young girls. Probably it was the result of sexual frustration. Unlike Grace he considers traveling and alcohol for escaping from his problem in place of sex.

Therefore Inge's characters in Bus Stop run towards sexual love in place of spiritual love. Even they are ready to overlook their parents' other aspects for sexual pleasure. Their eagerness for sexual pleasure drive towards destruction but soon they reconsider their faults and emerged as reformed characters. The end of the Bus Stop bring hope for better life for each character except Virgil. But Virgil's selection of life is his own decision.

Some critics objected Inge's over-emphasis on sex in Bus Stop. To Eric Bentley "Inge might have formed down the play's sexual preoccupation."¹⁵ On the other hand Richard Walts justified Inge's sex – based theme and said that he "is not writing about sex as a cheap, cross thing. He is using it rather to highlight the loneliness people experience the searching they have to endure to find love and understanding."¹⁶

In summing up, Hatch's appreciation is more positive when he writes that Bus Stop is "a delicate work, the night club girl who is vulgar but not cheap; the cowboy who is absurd but not ridiculous; the professor who is pitiable but not maudlin; the restaurant owner who is touch but not callous."¹⁷

The play, therefore, is study of emotionally impoverished lower middle class people who are willing to fulfill their sexual desire and to gain love. Ultimately they desire to settle for less than an ideal life.

Ultimately I wish to conclude the analysis after discussion the main theme of love and sex in *Bus Stop*. To R. Baird Shuman it "might have been subtitles 'An Anatomy of love' because Inge has attempted to explore the different shades of love in the play.

First of all what Inge has always emphasized is physical love. In the play the characters of Grace and Bo are hungry for sexual love. Bo meets Cherie in a club and is attracted by her beauty. The Grace – Carl relationship is also purely based Cherie is a beautiful girl while Bo is a young and attractive boy who has the quality to attract women. Dr. Lyman's third wife left him for a ball – player because she was sexually unsatisfied with him.

The characters of Cherie and Grace represent those women for whom the sex and love are entirely different subjects. In the absence of her husband Grace enjoys sex with Carl. They are not eager to marry each other while both of them are already married persons. There is no loyalty in their relationship even Carl tries to hide relationship even Carl tries to hide the fact about his marriage. Grace knows the fact and says, "he still

never said whether he was married." For Grace the affair is merely time pass as she says, "...every once in a while I gotta have me a man. Just to keep m'self from gettin' grouchy." Thus they are bound with necessity not with love.

For Cherie Bo is like other customers who meets her. Firstly she entertains him by providing sexual pleasure. She does not consider him as her would be husband. Apparently Inge has succeeded to separate love and sex as independent matter in some cases. Simultaneously Inge has condemned the extra marital affair. Grace's affair with Carl is not rationalized because she herself tries to hide the relationship from Elma and says, "...I don't wanta set no examples or anything. Do you think you overlook it and not think bad of me?"

The play also shows that economic condition plays an important role settle a marriage. The twentieth century American society was becoming more materialistic. Financial condition is an important factor to settle a marriage. At first Cherie does not accept Bo's proposal of marriage but at the end she goes with him. Perhaps she is now sure that he would be able to provide her financial security. Marital life is not merely based on emotion or love. It needs money to run a home.

Inge has presented three kinds of women through introducing Dr. Lyman's three wives. His first wife was greedy who took divorce on the ground of Lyman's mental cruelty. She

claimed from him a high alimony and never married again to get it. His second wife sued him for divorce on the grounds that Lyman was incontinent and always drunk. She did not give a chance to change him. His third and the last wife left him for a ball player even she did not claim for alimony after divorce perhaps she was sexually unsatisfied with the doctor. So all the three women did not want to compromise to settle their marriage.

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The Dark at the Top of the stairs

To Shuman "The Dark at the Top of the Stairs has been referred to as patch work."¹ In the play Inge was probably at his "experimental best".²

The setting of the play is at the home of Rubin Flood in small Oklahoma town close to Oklahoma City. The play is an attempt to probe the psychology of the characters like Cora and Rubin Flood, ten years old Sonny and sixteen years old Reenie. Cora is a middle aged woman who is not happy with her marital life. The complete break down in the communication between Cora and her husband is obvious early in the play. She is worried to settle her daughter Reenie in her marital life. So she fixes her date with Sammy who has come all the way from California. Reenie hesitates because she knows nothing about him. Her younger brother Sonny is very fond of collecting pictures of film stars. He is very close to his mother and has no attachment with his father. He is afraid to go upstairs to bed alone because there is no light.

Newly rich Ralstons arranges a party in the town club. Reenie attends the party with Sammy but feels uncomfortable there so she runs away from the party

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without informing him. In the climax of the play the audience comes to know that Sammy committed suicide because of Reenie's behaviour. At the end of the play the whole Flood family decides to change itself for a good life.

(a) concept of love :-

The play mainly presents the conflict between husband and wife which takes place due to the lack of love between them. The marriage of Cora and Rubin is based on the wrong foundation. In youth they got married due to the physical attraction. Once Cora and her sister Lottie were going to buy lace. They saw Rubin Flood riding down the street on a shiny horse. He looked at Cora and smiled. He again went to her house that night and wanted to meet her. Her parents were confused and didn't know what to do. They allowed Cora to go on riding with him. She became pregnant after their first meeting. And six weeks later Cora and Rubin got married. Cora was then only seventeen years old. Her parents did not want her to marry Rubin as he belongs to a family of ranchers. They thought they were uncivilized people. But Cora did not want any other

match in place of Rubin . When Lottie calls him the wickedest man and blames him for Cora's undesired pregnancy she defends him and says.

"I never blamed Rubin for that ,I was crazy in love with him. He just swept me off my feet and made all my objections seem kinda silly. He even made Mama and Papa seem silly"(280).³

Thus Cora's decision of marriage was based on physical attraction. An unexpected pregnancy forces them to take a serious decision like marriage immediately. Cora and Rubin had not much time to understand each other because Rubin has a traveling job of salesman while Cora is busy in her children . Cora always talk about the problems of her children as well as herself. She never seems to be concerned with her husband's problems . Her marital life lasted for seventeen years but she is unhappy with it. There is no romance in her life. The long absence of her husband makes her feel like widow : "I envy women who have their husband with them all the time. I never have anyone to me any place. I live like a widow" (227).

Cora is now unable to bear her husband's long absences So she suggests him to leave the job of selling harness and to begin the business of selling groceries or a filling station or garage. But Rubin refuses

to change his job as well as himself and advises her to look for a new man. Cora get hurt. She clarifies that she does not want to leave Rubin but needs his affection and concentration for her and her children : "I don't want a new man" (229).

In the first act of the play Cora-Rubin conflict reaches the highest point when Rubin quarrels with Cora because of Reenie's new dress. Gradually the subject of quarrel diverts into their personal problems. She blames that he is neglecting his duties of a husband as well as a father. He does not take care of his family. Rubin has no interest in her. She suspects probably he should have some women in different towns. So "you want to get out of town to go frisking over the country like a young stalfion" (229). Cora gets angry and objects Rubin is relationship with Marvis Pruitt. She does not like her "... I know what kind of woman she is.... She had her eye on you ever since I can remember" (245).

Cora also says that Rubin did not want to marry her. He took the decision of marriage in pressure. He should marry with a 'squaw' who would make you rich now too, would she? And you wouldn't have to pay any attention to her at all"(229). Cora has been habitual of the long absences of her husband .She does all household works herself. When Rubin warns her that he will leave

the house and never come back she says: "Go on. You're only home half the time as it is. We can get along with out you the rest of the time" (247).

Rubin's constant neglecting forces Cora to look for other means to keep her busy., So she has involved herself with her children:

"If I kept the kids too close to me, its only because you weren't there, and I had to have someone close to me. I had to have someone" (228). She is always busy in her children's affairs. Her elder daughter Reenie is very shy in nature. Cora is very much worried for her future. She wants her to settle in her marital life. So she fixes her date with Sammy and sends her in the party arranged by Ralstons. She purchases a costly dress for her without letting Rubin know about it. It causes a quarrel between them. But she prepares her daughter mentally to attend the party and enjoy it.

" Now , you have a nice date to the party and a lovely new dress to wear. You can be sure you'll have a good time" (239). Reenie is not interested in marriage. Cora explains to her that marriage is very necessary for everyone because it creates family and "you need some after you grow up. You need someone" (287). She also adds that when a person stars getting older, he or she

needs someone "who'll hear you if you get side and cry out in the night, and someone to give love and let you give your love back to him in return" (287). She also convinces her that she is a beautiful girl. She tries to remove Reenie's inferiority complex. "...You're pretty. You're every bit as pretty as Flirt or Mary Jane. Half a woman's beauty is in her confidence" (285). Cora tries to remove Reenie's fear about love. She tells her that a boy begins his love with kissing: "It's perfectly natural if a boy wants to kiss you and you let him. It's all right if you like the boy" (286). But if the boy does flirt with other girls, the girl has the right to leave the boy.

In the climax of the play Reenie becomes a refined character due to Sammy's unexpected death and Cora's teachings. Sonny is Cora's only son and Reenie's younger brother. He is now ten years old but still sleeps with his mother. Cora pays attention to him more than Reenie. He hates his father. Cora loves him more than anything else in the world. Cora fails to get the love of her husband. There is an emptiness in her life which makes her feel insecure. The insecurity turns her towards her son to fill up the emptiness when she asks, "...come to me Sonny ! Do you love me boy? Do you love your old mom?"

In the beginning of the play Cora fights with Rubin. She seems willing to settle with Lottie. She requests Lottie to keep her and her children with her at her home but Lottie refuses. Hearing Lottie's problems Cora realizes that her marital life is better than her sister's marriage. Lottie also persuades her to evaluate herself. She admits her own faults. Now she is able to understand the fact that she would have a happier life if she changes her attitudes. She should try to be a devoted wife as well as a devoted mother. Her overprotective attitude towards her children is also harmful for them.

Though Cora loves Rubin but she has no time for showing it. She is always concerned with her own needs but never tries to know what her husband needs. Lottie's refusal to help her and her long discussion regarding the relationship between husband and wife open her eyes. She comes to know that "the people we love aren't always perfect, are they? But if we love them, we have to take them as they are. After all, I guess I'm not perfect, either" (204). Earlier Cora tries to change Rubin according to her needs but the above statement shows Cora's new attitude towards life. She is ready to accept Rubin as he is. She also realizes that "there are all kinds of people in the world. And you have to live with them all."

God never promised us any different. The had people you don't hate. You're only sorry they have to be" (294).

In the last act a long discussion between Cora and Rubin removes her misunderstanding. She tries to understand his problems. She comes to know of Rubin's fear regarding his job and his financial crisis. When Rubin tells her that he got angry in Reenie's new dress because he had a little money, Cora says :

"Rubin, if I'd known that, I wouldn't have thought of buying the dress. You should have told me Rubin" (299).

Now she is ready to share all his problems as well as happiness. She admits her fault. She imagines that Rubin might have some fear. And she has never tried to know about it .When Rubin tells her that he has been always disturbed because of his job she says: "I never supposed you had it in you to fear" (298). She is also ready not to interfere in his freedom. She is not going to impose her own expectations on him. She accepts Rubin's request not to rearrange him like her home and says. "I'll remember. When you have fear about things please tell me" (299).

Now she is liberal to show her love for him. She wants her marital life in better condition. Her admission of love indicates towards her desire : "I love you And I couldn't get along with out you another day" (299).

In the climax Cora sends her children out of home to get privacy for her and her husband. It shows that Cora is now determined to get rid off from the life without love. She has learnt that her husband also needs her love like her children. She is an important link between her husband and her children so she should make balance of love between her children and her husband.

Rubin, Cora's husband, is a salesman who sells harness. That is why he is unable to give enough time to his family. He is very much conscious regarding his look and personality. His uncertain job makes him fearful about his dark future.

He is a very handsome man. In his youth he was an Oklahoma pioneer who fought Indians and buffalo. He was first seen by his wife "riding down the street on a shiny black horse like a picture of Sin." He had sexual appeal and he made her pregnant before they were married. Now he is a middle aged man and father of two children but he is not willing to accept the reality. He does not want to come out of his fantasy of youth. Cora comments watching him primp before the mirror : "You like being out on the road, don't you? You like to pretend you're still a young cowboy" (228).

He puts up the reason behind it that he has to attend customers so he must be good looking.

His behaviour is rude because he grew up in ranch. He uses rough and uncivilized language with his wife. Early in the play in a conversation he compares his wife with a mare who never wanted to give up her colts. Similarly Cora does not want to leave her children. She always pampers them and never attempts to provide any opportunity to her husband to be familiar with his children. He complains to her: "God almighty, when those kids was born you hugged'em so close to ya, ya made me think they was your own personal property, and I din have nothin' to do with'em at all" (228). He attacks Cora for her overprotective attitude towards their children, which has raised distance between father and children. They never need to go to their father for the solution of their problem because "ya pampered 'em so much and coddled 'em, they thought I was just bein' mean if I tried to drill some sense into their heads" (228).

Sometimes Rubin feels himself a stranger to his family. He expects Cora's attention towards him whenever he returns his home but Cora is busy with her children as usual. Rubin feels jealous of Cora's special love for Sonny. His objection is obvious when he says: "You're always kissin' and makin' over the boy untill I sometimes wonder who's top man around here" (228). Rubbin's children are also scared of him. The situation

becomes unbearable for him so he seeks pleasure out of home.

Rubin is rough in his behaviour. Cora doesn't like his talking. She objects on his language but he roughly says : "Well...I got my own way of sayin' things and it's pretty hard to change" (228). In youth Cora's parents were not willing to let her Marry-Rubin because his family where ranchers. They thought they were wild. But Cora loves him and determined to go with him. So they permitted her for marriage. Now Cora asks him to change his way of life. He protests against her advice when he says : "...We been married seventeen years now . It seems t'me you be rady t'accept me the way I am or start lookin' for new man" (229).

Rubin , like Sonny is afraid of the dark because it represents the uncertain future that stretches before him. He feels insecure regarding his job of salesman. The use of harness is now decreasing while the people are buying automobiles. But he is incapable to accept and face the reality. Early in the play when Cora asks him to change his profession he strictly refuses to change it : "...I was raised on a ranch and thought I'd spend my life on it. Sellin' harness is about all I'm prepared for as long as there's any harness to sell" (227).

At the end of the play Rubin tells¹⁹⁸ Cora that he has lost his job. He also says that the uncertainty of job always forced him to be out of the home. He has been suffering from the shortage of money .that is why he objects to Cora's purchasing of new dress for Reenie. When Cora says that he should have told her about his problem he replies " I din wanta make you worry too" (299).

In the third act of the play the character of Rubin emerges as a man of better understanding .His fear for dark future arise frustration and enforces him to keep a distance from his family though he loves it. He never wants to be a weak man before his wife. His ego checks him to share his problem with Cora because "it's hard for a man to admit his fears, even to his self ... He's always afraid of endin' up like ... like your brother in law Morris" (299). Apparently Rubin does not want to be a shadow of his wife. He wants his independent existence. He also hints Cora not to try taming him : "Just don't get the idea you can rearrange me like ya do the house whenever ya wanta put it in order" (299). He criticizes Cora's dominating attitude towards him. She should not impose her expectations on him. She never "really admitted to yourself what kina man I am. No, ya keep talkin' to me

like I was the kinda man you think I oughta be ... Don't you know who I am?" (297).

In the beginning of the play Rubin seems uninterested to care Cora's feelings and sentiments. When Cora asks him to leave his traveling job he comments on her rudely : "What do you want me to do? Give up my job and stay home here to pleasure you every day? ya talk like a man had nothing else to do but stay home and entertain you" (227). But in the last act Rubin shares all his problems with Cora and tries to understand her problems too. He also apologizes for fighting with her : "I wanna apologize. I'm sorry I hit ya, core I'm awful sorry ... It wasn't manly"(298-299). Now Rubin seems interested in removing all misunderstandings between him and his wife .He wants a happier and better marital life. Even he expresses all his fears before Cora. Cora offers her support whenever he would have problems or fear. His changed attitude is apparent when he says: "...I din wanta track up your nice clear house. Now wasn't that thoughtful of me?" (295)

Rubin has accepted the reality that he can find love and peace inside his home. He should try to be a better husband as well as a better father. He is ready to compromise for his peaceful life .He has learnt that

nobody is perfect and he should try to avoid shortcomings of the people around him. But he should look their qualities. He appreciates his wife who is "clean and dainty. Give a man a feeling of decency and order . . . and respect" (299).

He also expresses his feelings for Cora. He admits his love for her by saying "I love ya. You're a good woman and I couldn't git along without you" (299). Earlier Rubin wants to be a free man. He does not want to be like henpecked brother in-law. Morris but when Rubin returns to Cora, it is apparent that he will be tamed in much the same way as Morris has been.

Thus the changes in Rubin can provide him a better marital life. He is ready to give love to his wife and children though he is not ready to leave traveling job and to settle into the sort of job that would enable him to have a close relationship with his wife or children. That is why it is doubtful that his future life will be much different from the life at present.

However the play ends when Rubin and Cora are ready to make love. Rubbin seems very impatient and calls Cora upstairs again and again., Apparently he has learnt the importance of love for a better life.

Reenie, daughter of Cora and Rubin is a sixteen years old girl. She is very shy by her nature. She suffers

from lack of confidence because she has some physical imperfection. Her front teeth has broken. Moreover she has been overprotected by her mother. Being very sensitive girl, she becomes every upset from the fight between her parents. That is why she never wants to marry and tells her mother. "I don't think I ever want to get married I don't want to fight with anyone, like you and Daddy" (281). She doesn't want to marry and depend on her husband., There is no place for love in her life. To her love makes a person dependend on others. She wants to be self. dependant in her life : "I don't want to need anyone ever in my life. It's horrible feeling to need someone" (287). She is willing to join a school or an office for spending her life. Here her point of view is very unrealistic. She feels happy when she is alone practicing at the piano or studying in the library.

She feels very nervous to go in parties. She is afraid when Cora asks her to attend Ralston's party with Sammy. Sammy is Reenie's blind date? about whom she doesn't know anything. "Mom I feel sort of scared to go out with someone so different" (239). She doesn't want to go to party with Sammy as his date because she think she can not be liked by someone. Even she doubts her friend flirt who helps her in attending the party : "The only

reason she likes me is because I help her with her studies" (240).

Reenie suspect that probably Sammy would not be a good boy. According to her in the town blind dates are always given to those girls who are rejected : "They give blind dates to all the girls in town that nobody else wants to take" (241). Reenie is very much scared to go with Sammy and dance with him because her experience in dancing is not good. She never enjoys dance with boys.

"I never have a good time at those dances anyway. Noone ever dances with me" (241).

Sammy is a Jewish boy. Reenie is confused that she is not familiar with jewish persons. She does not know Sonny 's likes and dislikes. She leaves him in the mid- party because of humiliation. She thinks Sammy is probably bearing her instead of enjoying her company .When her mother asks her that why Sammy did not take her out to the car for making love at intermission time like other couples she answers: "He wouldn't have like me that way I'm just not hot stuff like the other girls" (285). Her answer shows her inferiority complex.

Reenie is a teenager. She has also the feeling of love like other young girls. She is big enough to understand the terms like love and marriage. But her shy

nature checks her to get involved with boys. Cora's overprotective behaviour towards her children makes them weak. Therefore Reenie is unable to face the reality of life as well as to take the right decision. She herself admits before her mother that she likes Sammy's "Yes I ...liked him ...very much" (286). Even she permits him to kiss her in their first date though she feels embarrassed. She shares her first experience with her mother and says : "...he took my hand. ...And then he put an arm around me and said... 'May I kiss you Reenie?' And I was so surprised, I said yes before I knew what I was saying" (286).

But Reenie fears to admit her love before him thinking Sammy would reject her. Sammy commits suicide because of humiliation when Reenie leaves him in midparty without informing him : "...Sammy and I started dancing. ...I got to feeling so humiliated I didn't know what to do I Just couldn't bear for Sammy to think that no one liked me" (293). After Sammy's death Cora criticizes her fault and says her shyness and sensitivity are only her selfishness. Reenie realizes her mistake and bemoans Sammy's death. If she admitted her love before Sammy, his life would be saved. There was no one with him when he needed a friend who could speak two kind words. Reenie's presence in the party and her

admission of love could save him. Sammy's suicide changer her attitude towards life and she says:

"He asked for me ...for me The only time anyone ever wanted me or needed me, in my entire life. And I wasn't there. I didn't stop once to think of ...Sammy I've always thought I was the only person in the world who had any feeling at all" (294).

Lottie, Cora's sister represents the qualities like "vulgarity, Victorian prudery biogotry and self righteousness."⁴ Lottie is an unfulfilled character. She is not happy with her marital life. she has dominating personality The character of Morris, her husband is entirely overshadowed by her . She herself admits that she is always bossy with him : "...I can boss Morris because he just isn't there any more to fight back. He doesn't care any more if I boss him or not" (279). She also thinks that Morris likes her bossy attitude and never says anything against her. But she is not happy with it she wants her husband of dominant personality. He should have a strong character. Sometimes he should go against her like Rubin because a person has the right to fight or quarrel with his wife whom he loves; "...I wish to God someone loved me enough to hit me. ...I'd like a good fight. Anything'd be better than this nothing" (279).

The marital life of Lottie seems quite peaceful but internally she is the most disturbed wife. When Cora says that she should have perfect marriage because Lottie and Morris are devoted to each other, she comments. "Oh, we're still devoted, still call each other "honey" just like we did on our honeymoon" (278). Lottie and her husband are very formal in talking. There is artificiality in their behaviour. She tells Cora that "Morris and I go around always being so sweet to each other, but sometimes I wonder may be he'd like to kill me" (279).

Lottie is a sexually frustrated character like Inge's other characters in different plays. She has never been satisfied sexually since her marriage. Her sexual frustration is apparent when she tells about her first night after marriage :

"That first night Morris and I were together, right after we were married, when we were in bed together for the first time, after it was all over, and he had fallen asleep ,I lay there in bed wondering what in the world all the cautioning had been about. Nothing had happened to me at all..."(280). She also discloses the fact that Morris has not touched her for three years .

Therefore Lottie's hunger for love pushes her to live in fantasies. She enjoys her fantasies of other men.

She admits her attraction towards the famous Hollywood star Rudolph Valentino and she has watched him in 'The Sheik' four times. But she hides her feelings before Morris and others. She is also an unfulfilled woman in the sense that she has no children. Cora reminds her that she never wanted children and Lottie clears that she had said so because she and Morris can not have children.

It is obvious that the character of Lottie is very much similar to the character Lola in Come Back little Sheba. Lottie and Morris are passing their life instead enjoying it. Sometimes she considers her marriage "May be it was as much my fault as Morris" (280). The lack of love in her life enforces her to get other means of enjoyment. She has a lot of cats to get rid off from loneliness. She enjoys vulgar talk to remove her sexual frustration. Probably it fulfills her sexual desires to some extent. Her frustration can be observed when Cora suggests her not to talk so vulgarly and she says "Well, that's all it is. It's only talk . Talk, talk, talk" (277). To Lottie she talks dirty "to convince myself that I'm alive. And I stuff myself with victuals just to feel I've got something inside me. And I'm full of all kinds of crazy curiosity about ...all the things in life ? I seem to have missed out on" (280).

However the life of Lottie and Morris is entirely based on compromise . They do not interfere in each other's matter . Unluckily Lottie has missed spiritual love as well as physical love. Morris is always lost in his thoughts. He is not concerned with Lottie's happiness or sorrows. He doesn't show her feelings, likes and dislikes so that Lottie can refine her personality to get his affection Lottie suggests Cora to request Rubin to come back to home if she loves him :

"Call up Rubin and ask him to come back. Beg him to come back, if you have to get down on your knees" (276).

She explains to Cora that love needs faith. If she loves Rubin she should not believe on other's gossips against him :

"Cora I don't think you should listen to the stories those old Werpel sisters tell you" (276).

According to her Rubin is a better husband than Morris who can fulfil all his wife's needs. She also expresses her inability to keep Cora and her children in her own house because it would break her marriage . Although she loves her sister yet she does not want to take risk. She insists on Cora to be more flexible before her husband.

The character of Sammy suggests the Oedipus problem. He is a military school cadet. In his longer speech he tells the audience about his former life. His father died before he was born. His mother is very busy actress of films in San Francisco. After his father's death she "has been married ...a few times since then. But I never met any of her husbands ...although they were all very fine gentlemen" (265). Apparently he is entirely cut off from his mother. He is suffering from loneliness and frustration. He has never been loved. Being a man without family he has spent his whole life in military academy. His mother can not keep him with her because of her profession. Sammy's pain of homelessness is apparent in the answer of Lottie's question about his home. He says, "well I ...I guess I don't really have a home---Mrs. Lacey" (265).

His Mother is so busy in her acting profession that she "doesn't have a place for me where she lives she ...she just doesn't know what else to do with me" (271). Later when Sammy commits suicide in a hotel in Oklahoma city, she doesn't come to see her son. Even she requests the people of the hotel to arrange funeral without her presence and she will pay all the expenses. She also asks them not to disclose the fact that Sammy was her son because she has already proposed herself

as a childless woman everywhere due to her professional purpose. Obviously for Sammy's mother her status and money is more important than her son. Sammy is very unlucky in the sense that he has never felt the warmth of love of his father as well as his mother .

But Sammy never complains against her mother. He always appreciates and protects her. He does not seem to go against her in his speeches. He tries to hide her neglecting attitude towards him when he says : "But you mustn't misunderstand about my mother. She is really a very lovely person. I guess every boy thinks his mother is very beautiful, but my mother really is" (271). Sammy is satisfied with her letters of sympathy. He recalls of two idyllic days spent with his mother in "San Francisco once, and we were together for two whole days. She let me take her to dinner and to a show and to dance. Just like we were sweethearts. It was the most wonderful time I ever had" (271). But now his isolation has been unbearable. He explains himself that he attends the parties to remove the sense of insecurity and loneliness . Nobody has taken interest to care him. He never wants to miss parties because it helps him to escape loneliness : "...every time I go to one, I have to reason with myself to keep from feeling that the whole world's against me" (271). The parties give the sense

that there are some people who can notice him and talk to him. He is not entirely a neglected person of the society.

He is very sensitive man. He likes Reenie and her family. He enjoys the company of her brother Sonny. Sammy has different idea regarding Reenie before he meets her because his friend told him that she is Flirt's friend and Flirt is a very frank girl. In contrast Sammy finds that Reenie is not like Flirt. He likes her in their first meeting. "You certainly look nice" (270). He also adds. "Gee ! I didn't expect you to be ...like you are ...thought you'd be ...well kind of like Flirt is ...But ...you're very nice too, in a different way" (270).

Sammy and Reenie attend Ralston's party, Reenie leaves him during the party because of humiliation. She also introduces him to Miss Marry Ralston. Sammy begins to dance with her but Mrs. Ralston doesn't like it and insults him. Sammy has to leave the party. He commits suicide because of frustration. He is unable to bear the fact that he is again a lonely person. He also misunderstands Reenie's shyness. He thinks he is again disliked by the people around him. There is no one who can show sympathy and love to him.

However , the play basically shows marital –life conflicts. But the main theme of the play is that love may be the panacea of all the problems of human life. The play can be considered as a “psychological study of the need for love and understanding within a family and among several people.”⁵ Rubin has failed to grow in love, Cora pampers her children and overprotects them. It is her sister Lottie’s refusal to help Cora which forces her to review her life and to grow up, to learn, to offer love not merely expect it. Reenie’s eyes are opened through Sammy’s suicide. She becomes able to believe Cora’s statement that the people we love aren’t always perfect are they? But if we love them, we have to take them as they are” (284). Reenie who had resented the need of love, now realizes that one needs others and has also a need to be needed in return . The condition of Lottie and Morris remains same .They have become habitual of the present pattern of life. They have accepted each other as they are. Their marital life, is bound with compromise instead of love.

Therefore the lack of love is responsible cause for the crisis in the given families. The final scene of The Dark at the Top of the Stairs when Reenie and Sonny have gone out of the home and Rubin and Cora are

going to upstairs so that they can make love " is not only an example of the love panacea ending, it is representative of a popular variation within the general type - the sex - as - salvation conclusion."⁶

(b) Emphasis upon sex :-

Like his earlier plays in The Dark at the Top of the Stairs the two aspects 'love and sex' are closely related. The sexual relationship between Cora and Rubin has not entirely collapsed but the warmth of love is absent in their relationship. Their relationship begins from physical attraction. They married not because they were in love but they had no other option to choose due to Cora's undesirable pregnancy. Marriage was inevitable for them. Moreover their tragedy is that they are unable to develop the love between them. Probably after some months of their marriage Cora is busy with her daughter while Rubin is struggling in his job for surviving. That is why gradually they begin to lose attraction for each other. In the climax of the play Cora and Rubin realize their faults and try to renew their relationship. They wish to send their children out of the house so that they can make 'Love'. Cora "is able to go off with Rubin for a night of love that Inge suggests will lead to a solution of their

long standing problems."⁷ Obviously here love means the contentment of sexual desire.

Lottie is a sexually frustrated lady. Her husband Morris is unable to satisfy her sexual needs. She "is obviously sex-starved, and she has the simultaneous desire to master and to-be-mastered."⁸ They have no children so she has kept cats as pets in her house and tries to divert her attention from pain and sexual frustration. She also seeks pleasure in vulgar talk. Lottie's character has the qualities like "Vulgarity. Victorian prudery, bigotry and self righteousness ... qualities often associated with severely sexually repressed people."⁹ There is no intimacy in their relationship as husband and wife. Even Lottie often addresses Morris as Daddy. Both of them are busy in their own matters. Lottie is busy in eating and playing with cats while Morris has his patients for treatment. Lottie herself tells that Morris has not touched her for three years. Lottie's sexual frustration can be observed in her speech with Cora. She "never did enjoy (sex) the way some women ... say they do" (). In the above sentence Lottie explains "the failure of her marriage, her own frigidity and the accompanying emasculation spiritual and sexual of her husband."¹⁰ She

also asks Cora to call Rubin back to home because he is a better husband who can provide her sexual satisfaction.

The characters of Reenie and Sammy are not developed to make any sexual relationship. Their relationship breaks before a proper beginning.

Flirt, Reenie's friend and her lover Punky Givens are supportive characters. They enjoy dating. They do not hesitate in making love like Sammy and Reenie.

Thus in *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs*, Inge has again used the term of love in surface level. There are conflicts in the lives of characters because they are not sexually satisfied. They have hunger for sex and it ruins their lives though the main problem of all the major characters of the play is fear and isolation but the main reason of the disturbance in the lives of Rubin, Cora and Lottie is the lack of love or sexual love. In the climax of the play Rubin and Cora try to renew their relationship when they go upstairs for making love. Lottie's situation does not change. She remains with Morris in spite of being unsatisfied. Consequently I wish to conclude the analysis with a short explanation based on Inge's main theme of love and sex which is used in *'The Dark at the Top of the Stairs'* in various sense.

Inge has attempted to highlight the serious problem of unsuccessful marriages in the contemporary American society. Probably the problem was because of wrong beginning. In the beginning Inge's couples seem eager to make sexual relationship but they fail to develop spiritual love. They are forced to marry their partners after first sexual experience. Like Lola, Cora became pregnant before her marriage. Apparently Cora and Rubin married due to physical attraction. They did not try to find out other details. Their way of thinking is different because of their different family background.

When play opens the life of Cora and Rubin is out of romance like Doc and Lola in *Come Back Little Sheba*. After getting married they realized that their way of thinking are different because of their different family background. The theme of the play indicates that only love is not sufficient to run a life properly. Financial factor plays an important role to settle a marital life Cora has high dreams for her children while Rubin's income is not enough to provide his family the needs they desire. Moreover Rubin does not change his business as he says, "I was raised on a ranch and thought I'd spend my life on it. Sellin' harness is above all I'm prepared for... as long as there is any harness to sell."

Rubin is always out of his home and considers Cora a caretaker to look after his home and children. As an ordinary wife Cora wants her husband's attention towards her. Her inner

pain is apparent when she says, "I envy women who have their husband with them all the time... ." She suspects her husband's character because he avoid her Cora's statement is very natural when she says to Rubin, "you want to get out of town to go frisking over the country like a young stalfron."

In the play Inge has attempted to show the significance of love and sex between husband and wife. Love and sex are closely related while we talk about the husband - wife relationship. Sex is the means to show love for her husband or wife. Both of them have to sacrifice for love. Sex revives their relationship and brings a change in their lives Cora is too busy not her children to remember her duties as a wife. Rubin is always on tours and he wants privacy with Cora while is at home. But their son Sonny is always with his mother even he sleeps with Cora at the age of twelve. Gradually the circumstances increases distance between husband and wife even Rubin abuses and hits Cora. At the end they realizes their mistake and apologizes to each other. In the climax when the curtain falls Reenie and Sonny are going to watch movie so that Cora and Rubin can get privacy. Rubin is upstairs and calls Cora impatiently, "Cora ! come on honey" and Cora says, "I'm coming, Rubin. I'm coming." Apparently they have realized the importance of love and sex in their lives. Now they are ready to perform the duties of parents as well as a life partner.

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C H A P T E R 5

CONCLUSION

What emerges from this analysis is that the main concern of William Inge is the significance of love and sex in common people's lives in 20th century America. The prominent element that runs through all these plays is the need of love and sex in the lives of lower middle class people to maintain their family.

The history of American drama shows that in the beginning the playwrights were interested in fancy stories but by the end of 19th century they began to write about real life. O' Neill and Elmer Rice produced various good and successful plays in American theatre and followed the stream of Realism, Naturalism and Expressionism. They exposed the problems of common American people. Broadway plays, a new form of American drama became popular in the first half of the 20th century because the plays show, the struggle, anxieties and dreams of ordinary people. Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller are the important playwright of Broadway theatre and William Inge continued the tradition of these two popular playwrights. The plays of these playwrights deal with "Broadway's prevailing belief that love conquers all."¹

Since his childhood days Inge was fond of theatre. He studied drama in college and did a research on David Belasco's plays. He was greatly influenced by Williams even he joined theatre after he met him. Hence he got inspiration from Williams but his story and characters are based on his own close observation. He grew old in a small Midwestern town so his characters are also small town people with small town mentality. His characters struggle to survive. These ordinary people have a thirst for money and luxurious life. They always sought for sexual pleasure. They suffer from physical and spiritual isolation as well as sexual frustration. Inge has tried to show what love means in modern American society. His four major plays show that his characters are always in search of physical love. The thirst for sex is so powerful in them that they can go against the so called moral values to fulfil their desire. In Bus Stop the sexual relationship between Grace and Carl is disapproved by Inge when Grace herself comments, "... Do you think you can overlook it and not think bad of me"().¹ Here 'it' indicates towards her relationship with Carl.

Inge seems in favour of the institution of family because all his plays end "in marriage and reconciliation." Marie, Madge,

Rosemary and Cherie go with their partners to settle their lives at the end of the plays. On the other hand Lola and Cora realize their faults and turn back to their husbands with some changes. Probably their lives will be better and happier than now. When all these plays begin, all the characters seem in trouble. The crisis in the lives of these people comes to an end when plays end. Inge seems very optimistic in the end. All the couples that Inge has created – Doc and Lola, Madge and Hal, Rosemary and Howard, Bo and Cherie and Rubin and Cora – pass their “period of adjustment” and emerge out of it successfully.

Inge's plays move around a particular family except Bus Stop. In these family worlds the lack of understanding creates discord. Lola and Doc and Cora and Rubin started their partnership on wrong foundation but the crises in their lives taught them the great truth – just as we need other, we have also a need to be needed in return. To Adler it is “selfishness that corrodes a relationship.” The case of Flo Owens in Picnic is also similar to the case of Lola. Flo becomes unmarried mother and she had to marry. Later her husband left her with two children to face the stark realities of life lonely while Doc has never left his wife despite of her shortcomings. But their relationship is very formal. There is no intimacy and warmth in their relationship. On the other hand the relationship between

Hal and Madge in Picnic has not a satisfactory beginning. It may be a relationship like the relationship between Doc and Lola or between Rubin and Cora in future which has no warmth of love.

The relationship between these partners is very formal. They do not feel love for others. They are bound with necessity. The success of each relationship lies in the "willingness and unwillingness of the partners to sacrifice their selves to love."² His plays show the tendency of "capturing." In other words, instead of the "give and take" all complain against their partners or blame other people for their destiny but they themselves do not want to change. Inge's couples begin their love with physical relationship which later emerges out as short term love. Lola and Doc, Flo and her husband Madge and Hal, Cherie and Bo and Cora and Rubin make physical relationship before getting married but later they come to realize that they have done the blunder mistakes of their lives. Lola, Flo and Cora had to marry their partners because of their undesired pregnancies.

These couples face a great responsibility to bear a family while psychologically they are not prepared for it. Moreover except Bo

they do not have financial security. Consequently their marital life becomes full of troubles and 'Love' becomes a secondary thing for them.

Inge's characters consciously or unconsciously avoid their partners, gradually a large gap comes between them. In the case of Lola and Doc in Come Back Little Sheba Doc is busy in work at hospital while Lola is too busy in her dreams to take care of her husband and her home. Her incapability to bear a children also pushes her to be in the world of dreams. But in the climax of the play they realize that they can lead a better and happier life if they change themselves a little. Apparently "if true companionship has not brought them together at least suffering has made them tolerant and needful of a friendly relationship, which they quickly establish."²

The character of Marie represents a modern girl with practical point of view. There is no place for love in her life. She enjoys sex with Turk while plans to marry Bruce a rich and reputed man. She "likes Turk but he's not the marrying kind." Perhaps as a lover he is perfect but as a husband he lacks the characteristics of Bruce.

In Picnic Hal and Madge do the same mistake as Lola and Flo did in their youth. In the end Madge leaves her home to live with Hal despite his uncertain future because she loves him. Marie and Madge are the characters with different outlooks. Marie selects a rich boy to marry him while she shares her emotions with a young muscle man Turk. On the other hand Madge is eager to leave a rich boy Alan because she has no passion for him; Hal who is an ordinary boy attracts her. In Hal she find all that she misses in Alan. So she selects him to live with despite his financial insecurity. It is obvious Madge's "deepest emotional needs have been answered by Hal ...Hal too has found compassion and tenderness for the first time."⁴

The case of unmarried Howard and Rosemary is entirely different. They know each other for a long time. They go for dating to remove their loneliness and frustration. They are middle aged so they think it is too late to marry. But the entry of Hal compels Rosemary to marry Howard. The play shows that their relationship survives without the essence of love. In the end both of them are united to escape loneliness and sexual frustration. It can be hoped that love would develop between them after getting married.

In Bus Stop Bo Cherie conflict is used to explore the theme of love broadly. The play ends with a hope of a better and happier marital life because Bo and Cherie are suitable for each other. Bo a handsome and financially well established boy is in need of a wife while Cherie, a beautiful girl is in need of a husband who can provide her financial security as well as love beyond sex. Grace represent the people for whom sexual pleasure is more important than anything else in the world. She makes sexual relation with Carl a bus driver in the absence of her husband to escape sexual frustration and isolation : 'cause I'm a restless sort of woman and every once in a while I gotta have me a man just to keep m'self from gettin' grouchy." She remains alone in the end of the play as Carl provides her only temporary love.

Dr. Lyman is one of those people who are not ready to change themselves for the sake of love : "It takes strong men and women to love.... People strong enough inside themselves to love... without humiliation" (200). That is why he is alone in spite of marrying three times. To him "...Getting married is a careless habit(155). Thus he owes his unhappiness and his perversity (he molest young girls) to his inability to subordinate himself to love.

Elma is a character of young girl who is new in the world of love and romance even she has not gone in dating till now. But she likes romantic talk of Dr. Lyman as she is not too young to understand the subject.

Virgil's love for Bo is a pure love beyond any selfishness. As a responsible guardian Virgil always checks Bo from behaving wrongly. Thus he provides him parental love.

However Bus Stop presents a group of people "whose attitudes towards love suggest the scope that this emotion holds for mankind."⁵ But The Dark at the Top of the Stairs presents 'a psychological study of the need for love and understanding within a family and among several people'⁶

It opens when the life of Cora and Rubin is out of romance. Cora is so busy in her children that she is unable to pay attention to her husband Rubin. Rubin, like Doc was also forced to marry Cora because of her undesired pregnancy. Rubin's financial uncertainty makes him unable to provide all that his family needs. So conflicts and quarrels take place between them and love disappears. The play ends with the reconciliation of the couple after they realize their faults.

Sammy the Jewish cadet kills himself because Reenie "wasn't around to help him when he needed comfort" ().

Inge's all plays, therefore show that 'love' can be the solution of the problems of the modern people in daily life. Inge has found that mankind 'might be the object of pity or of anger but should be treated mainly with love.' "Life without love is lonely' is the main theme of Inge's plays. The end of every play is the plays is hopeful. Regarding the significance of love in ordinary people's lives, Bus Stop is a "composite picture of varying kinds of love." The play shows an assorted group of people and their attitudes towards love. Earlier Inge's people are not ready to sacrifice but later their sufferings make them flexible and they compromise. Will Master's (the sheriff in Bus Stop) statement shows Inge's own opinion when he says, "A man don't deserve the things he loves unless he kin be a little humble about gettin' 'em ...being ' humble ain't the same thing as bein wretched"(). The characters of Bo and Hal are hungry for love because they don't have a family who can love them. Love is the only thing which can vitalize and give meaning to their lives. In The Dark at the Top of the Stairs Sammy has mother but she is too busy in her work to love him. "My mother doesn't have a

place for me, where she lives. She... just dosent know what else to do with me"(271).

For the first time he feels that someone wants him or needs him in his entire life when he meets Reenie. But he commits suicides because Reenie has left the party without informing him and he becomes disappointed. Sammy is weak in the comparison of Bo and Hal because he is unable to find his love while Bo gets Cherie at the end. Bo's point is strong that "A man's gotta right to the things he loves"(). Though Hal departs without Madge, he is followed by her after his departure. She leaves her home to go Tulsa because she has the address of Hal. Hal also agrees with Bo when he says:

"A guy's gotta claim the things in life that're his." It is not necessary that a person whom we love is a perfect human being. In this condition compromise is inevitable to maintain the relationship for a long time Inge supports the concept of compromise in each relationship through the character of Cora when she says, "The people we love aren't perfect ...But if we love them, we have to take them as they are"(). True love needs sacrifice and compromise. A person can change a little himself or herself according to the need of his or her companion so that the life can be more peaceful and happier.

Besides, as it is evident Inge has always emphasized upon sex in his major dramas. His "basic plot line revolves around a heroine threatened either with violence or sexual aggression by a rainbunctious male."⁷ Lola, Marie, Flo, Madge, Rosemary, Cherie and Cora – all are attracted by the males whom Herbert Gold has called the "male impersonator." Inge's hero is 'equipped with bulging biceps and enormous sexual potency.'⁸ He shows his manhood by exaggerated physical characteristics. Turk of Come Back Little Sheba, Hal of Picnic, Bo Decker of Bus Stop and Rubin Flood of The Dark at the Top of the Stairs have athletic and erotic prowess. All have the power to draw attention of females towards them. Bruce in Come Back Little Sheba and Alan in Picnic are defeated by the maleness of Turk and Hal. Turk and Hal succeed to get their heroines easily. In Bus Stop Dr. Lyman's last wife also leaves him for a ball player. The love between Inge's hero and heroine is the result of physical attraction. Doc and Lola, Flo and her husband, Hal and Madge, Bo and Cherie and Rubin and Cora make sexual relationship in their very first meeting. Unfortunately Lola, Flo and Cora become pregnant. As a result they have to marry their partner without being self dependent financially. This bring a lot of problems in their marital life and the gap between husbands and wives enlarges. So Doc makes himself busy in his work of hospital, Flo and children are left by

her husband in their own fate and Rubin is always out of his home, avoids his duties and busy in fighting with Cora.

Inge has also presented the problem of sexual frustration in the lives of contemporary American people. Lola, Rosemary, Grace, Dr. Lyman and Lottie are the sexually frustrated people. Lola finds pleasure in watching the young couple's (Marie and Turk) love making. It soothes her heart because her own marital life is out of sex she misses her youth when she says; "...Little Sheba should have stayed young forever." Here the little dog Sheba is the symbolic representation of her youth. Her sexual Frustration becomes unbearable when she watches Marie's love making with Turk: "Little Sheba ...Come Back... Come Back Little Sheba. Come Back. Rosemary's sexual frustration becomes out of control when she watches half naked Hal and later his dance with Madge. Grace's sexual need pushes her to take shelter under the arms of an ordinary bus driver Cart even though she admits it is not the right way to fulfill her desires. Dr. Lyman's sexual frustration has made him drunk. His all three wives have left him. His dialogues when he performs the character of Romeo in the restaurant shows his frustration. He attempts to steal some moments of pleasure by intimate talk with the young girl Elma. Lottie, Cora's sister, is a sex starved character who 'has the simultaneous desire to master and to be

mastered" by her husband. Sexually she is unsatisfied as she remarks "It's been over three years since he (Morris) even touched me" (). It is obvious that she also enjoys her fantasies of other men but she never admits the psychological overtones of these fantasies.

Inge's Come Back Little Sheba and The Dark at the Top of the Stairs present importance of sex in marital life. The relationship between Doc and Lola is very formal. Doc calls his wife 'Baby' while Lola addresses him 'Daddy'. They live under one roof but there is a large gap between them.

Sex seems impossible between them. Both of them try to show themselves contented but they fail. Lola's interest in Marie – Turk affair and Doc's attraction towards Marie show the truth of their relationship. Moreover the drunk scene shows a telling insight into what Doc really feels. Obviously their marital life is not in satisfactory condition because there is no warmth of love and sex between them.

In the case of Cora and Rubin love and sex have also disappeared from their life. But in the climax they realize the importance of love and sex in the marital life. The play ends

when Cora and Rubin are ready to enjoy sexual pleasure once again. Rubin calls Cora and she replies "I'm coming Rubin I'm coming." Probably they have found the key of a happy life. Marriages, therefore, demands in return for its emotional consolations a sacrifice of the hero's image of maleness. Aggressiveness should be given up for soft virtues. Love and sex are closely related in marital life. sex is the means to show love for husband or wife. Sex revives their relationship and brings a change in their lives sacrifices compromise are also necessary elements for a happy and successful marriage.

Inge also seems in favour of legal love and sex by providing the option of marriage. Marriage gives stability to the relationship while dating provides a short term relationship. Marriage provides a family to man and women with a purpose. It is necessary for everyone because "you need someone." Marriage can be the solution of the isolation because it provides a companion "who'll hear you if you get sick and cry out in the night and someone to give love and let you give your love back to him in return"(287). "Marriage thus becomes a crucial avenue of escape."⁶ Simultaneously Inge has attempted to show that financial factor plays an important role to settle a marriage. Rubin's poor financial condition causes tension in her family. While Bo's good financial condition inspires Cherie to accept his

proposal of Marriage. He has expressed what he experienced around him. He noticed that "...GIs had a totally different attitude or they had a brand new attitude. They weren't going to take any false values or false moral values anymore...at Washington University ...I taught one section... I noticed the way they reported on books, on the sexual happening, completely different, very casually and there was no shock or anything." Obviously the society was more liberal regarding the matter of sex in the contemporary period. Sex become an important factor of the people's lives and they did not hesitate to discuss it. Inge has made clear that illegal love i.e. extra marital affairs provides only short term pleasure. His plays have emphasized upon the importance of physical love and his characters have hunger for love and sex.

Besides other aspects Inge's plays have highlighted some important aspects of modern American life. Love and sex are not hidden matters among boys and girls. They enjoy sexual relationship before getting married. Though dating helps a boy and a girl to understand each other before marriage it is merely used to enjoy sex in modern age. Lola has enjoyed sex only with Doc and She feels 'cheated at never having known any man other than' her husband. She "never had any fun at all until I met Doc. The attraction between boys

and girls mainly takes place because of physical beauty and economic status. These factors have introduced and developed the relationship between Doc and Lola, Marie and Turk, Marie and Bruce, Hal and Madge, Alan and Madge, Bo and Cherie and Rubin and Cora. In America 'Dating has become a common practice in society'.

Therefore Inge has over emphasized upon sex in his plays. Some critics have criticized Inge for it but he has "managed to mingle sex and sentiment to good effect in the theatre and present lonely people whose problems for good or ill are resolved by love."

As far as the theme is concerned one can not always easily agree with Inge's suggestion that modern man's redemption is through sex. However some unlikely relationships are "perpetuated on a sexual basis and in many marriage sex appear to be the only common ground between two people." In marital life love and sex are supplement to each other.

Although Inge has exploited sex for theatrical effect, he is more interested in the redemptive power of conjugal or

romantic love. He 'visualizes the world as a mass of outstretched arms, blindly grouping for each other with every problem resolved in the marriage bed.' Apparently the main theme of Inge's work is that people find salvation from fear, need and insecurity only through the fulfillment of domestic love. It is true that, love is the panacea to all the difficulties.

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